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ON THE COVER

BLUEPRINT STAFF WRITERS DIVE INTO THE HYBRID MODEL AND POSSIBLE RE-OPENING OF ACALANES AMID THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC. TURN TO PAGE 10 TO READ MORE!

Student Proposes African-American Studies Course

A student's groundbreaking open letter sparks community action to teach African-American history

Marisa Guerra Echeverria and Lyanne Wang | Staff Writers

Modern-day instances of redlining, voter suppression, police brutality, and the school-to-prison pipeline carry the legacy of a fundamentally racist and unjust American society. With the rise in conversation about racial equity and the African-American experience, many advocates point out that the first step in combating current systemic racism is to study historical racial injustices. In addition, these aspects often hamper the integral contributions and rich culture of the African-American community, which students do not learn enough about.

Sophomore Amani Williams, along with staff members Natalie Moore and Brian Smith, proposed an African-American Studies course for sophomores, juniors, and seniors on Oct. 21 with the goals of informing students on the history and contributions of African-Americans as well as ultimately cutting down on racially-charged incidents in school.

Williams kickstarted the discussion surrounding the importance of learning about African-American contributions earlier this year with the publication of her letter, *Acalanes Must Teach Black History*. The letter voiced the necessity of taking action towards teaching a more inclusive history.

"In writing this, I don't want sympathy but rather empathy and action... I will continue to push until African-American history is as integrated into our society as racism is," Williams said in *Acalanes Must Teach Black History*.

To push forth this dialogue, Williams inspired and helped propose an African-American Studies course for Acalanes to teach. The course's proponents plan to



Blueprint Cartoon/Zoe Edelman

make the class a history requirement for sophomores and offer it as an elective for juniors and seniors. The curriculum could fit as a possible semester-long or full-year class.

"We would like to see something like this be a graduation requirement moving beyond [an] elective," proponent and U.S. History teacher Brian Smith said.

Currently, the class is still in its proposal phase, which the Acalanes Administrative Council will review by Dec. 14.

"Instructional Councils have provided feedback on the proposed courses and the Administrative Council will review the feedback this week. Any new courses would be recommended at the December 14 Governing Board meeting," Acalanes Associate Superintendent Aida Glimme said in her weekly educational services update.

Despite it being early in the course review process, proponents are hopeful for the passing of African-American Studies as its contents coincide greatly with the Acalanes Union High School District's recent decisions to implement strategies promoting racial equity.

The African-American Studies curriculum would vary from focusing on the African continent preceding colonialism to the impact of racism both individually and institutionally on African and African-American people. Furthermore, it delves into the rich African-American culture and the Black experience today.

While the African-American Studies cur-

riculum might overlap with events and topics covered in U.S. and World History classes, this course more thoroughly examines the crucial African-American perspective on historic events which "typical" history textbooks do not go over.

"So it definitely overlaps, but African-American Studies just goes more in-depth because everything is dealing with [an] African-American perspective. [My class] covers WWI and the Great Depression and we also cover civil rights, but it's all from the [African-American] perspective so you just get it as added information" Miami Norland Senior High School's African-American Studies teacher Renee O'Connor said.

O'Connor is one of many educators across the nation taking these strides for equal representation with African-American Studies. Her curriculum at Miami-Norland Senior High School, a primarily African-American high school in Miami Gardens, FL, serves as an inspiration for Amani Williams' proposal. Acalanes will look to her curriculum and experience in teaching this class as a guiding framework for the proposal.

"I was totally blown away that we didn't have this class [at my school at first]... How can I be a teacher at a Black school where the majority of the kids are African-American and they don't know their history?... I started out with like maybe one class and... last year I had seven periods of it... I've been teaching it for the past five years here," O'Connor said.

Another more local guidepost for the class's curriculum is Berkeley High School, whose African American Studies Department allows students to comprehensively study Black history as well as Black culture since its establishment in 1968. Their various course offerings include African-American History, Economics, Psychology, Literature, and Dance.

"In our department, students have an opportunity to take a plethora of classes that come from an Afrocentric perspective and highlight the accomplishments and history of people of African descent. These courses provide a unique balance of truth to typical Eurocentric curriculum," Berkeley High School African Diaspora Dance Teacher

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Students and Teachers Both Adapt to Final Exam Changes

In the week preceding winter break, students will take final exams over a week testing their knowledge of a semester's worth of material

Brendan Connelly and Saylen Cardoni | Staff Writers

In a typical year, students travel to school, and for one week, take their finals on campus. Nearly a year after the initial outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, challenges have arisen for students and teachers alike.

During the last week of the semester, from Dec. 15 to Dec. 18, students will participate in online finals to evaluate what they have learned so far in distance learning, a test of both students' knowledge and the capabilities of distance learning.

However, there are unique concerns regarding finals during distance learning. One severe concern of many teachers, parents, and students is the increased likeliness of cheating.

Since distance learning began in March, cheating is a topic teachers are extra aware of. Teachers have struggled to monitor students in the same way they can in the classroom. This year's circumstances have made students' adherence to the academic honesty policy far more critical than in past years.

"I just speak to the students. I tell them how important having integrity is and that I have trust in them to make the right decisions," social studies teacher Lyenne Denny said.

Canvas, the recently adopted learning platform and where students take tests, allows teachers to see when students leave the test tab. Nevertheless, it only can flag students as suspicious and does not guarantee that they cheated.

"My investigations showed me that more than 90 percent of all students on the last test have some degree of suspicion of cheating in that they left the test screen multiple times, some more than 20. I am working on a plan to address this," Social Studies Department Chairperson Joseph Schottland said.

This common issue creates obvious concern for the validity of tests during distance learning. To combat this, teachers must develop unique



strategies that work well for their students and their class. Additionally, according to AUHSD policy, finals cannot be worth more than twenty percent of a grade.

"In my history class, my teacher acknowledges cheating, and he has given us far fewer multiple-choice tests. Recently, he removed the biggest test of the year from the test category, which was because he suspected cheating," sophomore Jack Hambidge said.

In addition to teacher concerns, students must manage stress and prepare for finals. Because of the unfamiliar circumstances, there is even more anxiety among the students. Many students are generally unaware of how finals will proceed this year.

"[Students are] apprehensive and a bit fearful. This is an unusual year, and they are afraid of an unusual final," Schottland said.

Throughout the year, teachers spent significantly less time in synchronous sessions with their students. For some classes, this prevented covering certain material that has been covered in most years.

"We have less class time while also trying to be flexible with regards to what the students may be going through on a personal and emotional level. It has been rather frustrating having to give up some of my curriculum but it is what it is and I have had to let it go," Denny said.

The circumstances of this final are unique. The finals' schedule, however, is similar to that of previous years with two finals per day from

Blueprint Photo/Jojo Bishop

Tuesday through Friday.

Students will take their first and third-period finals on Tuesday, their fourth and sixth-period finals on Wednesday, their second and third seventh-period finals on Thursday, and their fifth and zero-period finals on Friday. Finals week, however, does not specifically consist of only two periods a day. Students will continue to see their teachers normally, with finals taking place in the designated periods.

For freshmen, there was a Zoom meeting with a collection of freshman teachers on Wednesday, Dec. 2. This allowed students to learn how to prepare for finals and talk to teachers about specific topics to study. Additionally, the week before finals, freshmen can even come to campus to prepare.

"Next Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, [freshmen] have the opportunity to come to campus and spend 1.5 hours studying and preparing for final exams with a teacher and small group of students," Associate Principal Mike Plant said in an email to students.

Students, teachers, and school administrators are all working hard to create successful finals and manage student stress.

"I think it is important to keep in mind that this is a very unprecedeted year and that we are all doing our best to make sure our students are learning. Finals may look different to some, but this is definitely a year to embrace change," Denny said.

African-American Studies

Continued from 1

Dawn Williams said.

In contrast, Acalanes' history classes cover African-American cultures and contributions infrequently. US and World history courses touch upon subjects such as slavery, imperialism, and the abolition movement, but the African-American achievements beyond them are rarely studied in-depth.

"I think that the tough circumstances or the tragedies of the African-American experience are explored [in the US History class] and some of the people that rose up in those moments are celebrated as [contributors], but I think it's always coupled with the travesty that went with it," Smith said.

Both Acalanes students and teachers alike voice their thoughts on the need for more racially inclusive curriculums.

"I think the course would definitely bring light to African American history [and] since it isn't really taught properly in regular history classes, I think a course dedicated to it would be great," sophomore Luca Mathias said.

Inequity in historical perspectives is especially apparent in topics such as imperialism and colonialism, in which many students learn solely from the Eurocentric point of view.

"When taking World History it was very one-sided... it was always [about] the colonizers, not the colonized. It was always the people in power. I would hope to learn about the whole truth, not part of it," Amani Williams said.

The recent surge of the Black Lives Matter movement further raised awareness on the need for a better understanding of the richness, diversity, and contributions of the African-American community.

"Black people have literally and metaphorically built this country yet receive very little credit for many of their achievements," US and World History teacher Haley Walsh said. "If these people have an equal share in the country's history then they should also have equal representation in our curriculum."

As of now, the only course option for Acalanes students who wish to learn more about different racial backgrounds in America is the Introduction to Ethnic Studies class introduced in the 2020-2021 school year. This semester-long elective teaches about the experiences of various races, eth-

nicities, and cultural groups in the United States.

However, while the course brings a degree of African-American representation to Acalanes' course offerings, Ethnic Studies students feel that the class cannot capture the full scope of the African-American experience in the amount of time given.

"[In Ethnic Studies], we are only allowed a short period of time to try and understand so much [history that] isn't taught in everyday classrooms and while it is satisfying and fulfilling, it's impossible to get a full grasp [of it] because it's only a semester class," sophomore Olivia Banks said.

Many educators also feel that a single semester or a single history unit cannot sum up the integral role of the African-American community, not only in American history but in the American present as well.

"[The African-American Studies class] is important because we are [just] as important as everyone else in this country. The story needs to be told more than just one paragraph in a history book or one day in your world history class because our story is really what built America," O'Connor said.

The challenge in composing a successful class is that Acalanes' course proposal process always accumulates a large number of new elective proposals that the District then selects for students to choose from. This leads to the complication of not having enough students to sign up for certain classes which ultimately results in a competition between elective proposals for student sign-ups.

"[Acalanes] used to have like...these [elective] wars of people trying to sell their elective over other electives other than just laying out the [classes]...I would like to believe that there's room for us to create some awareness about [the African-American Studies] course and why we'd offer it," Smith said.

However beneficial African-American Studies may be to the community, advocates worry that the class will not garner the amount of support it deserves at Acalanes.

"I would jump at the opportunity to take such a class... but I don't see much popularity [of it] among the majority [of] white students. Their history or ancestry isn't being kept out of their classroom, so it's perfectly natural [for them] to not care as much for what isn't said," Banks said.

Despite these challenges, educators of this course emphasize that the inclusion of African-American history will encourage

anti-racist values starting within a school environment.

"For a school to have an African-American Studies Department means that the school is willing to interrogate white supremacy, power, and oppression," Dawn Williams said.

Moving beyond its benefits for Acalanes as a whole, learning about the detailed history of minoritized groups will empower students of color by supplying them with knowledge of their history, heroes, culture, and importance within the United States.

"If I can show [African-American] kids the rich history of our people and all the things that we did to...create and build America, maybe they will feel more empowered... But if all [that African-American students] know is slavery, then I feel like: do we really even matter in this country? It's just like this thing that's always in the back of their heads," O'Connor said.

Furthermore, advocates state that implementing these curriculums will equally benefit students of other races by improving their awareness of the world around them. Without education, hate and ignorance will only continue to expand within the Lamorinda community.

"A required African-American history course will inspire students to expand their vision outside of their bubble... Students can take away a better understanding of my history, which then resolves empathy, and I think that with empathy, ignorance and insensitivity on campus will reduce," Amani Williams said.

Education will not only provide insight into racial discrimination at a local level but will also give students a deeper understanding of how historic racial injustices continue into the present day.

"I feel that if every kid in this country took this class and really understands [that] what is happening in the news today is clearly related to the civil war and [previous tragedies], we would get a better understanding of how this country is built and run [today]," O'Connor said.

In advancing these efforts, the community holds complete confidence that implementing this course will bring necessary change and awareness to all Acalanes students, no matter their race.

"It will cause students to realize prejudice or biases they have, through empathy that has developed with the expansion of knowledge which then results in a change that is equal and equitable for all," Williams said.

Leadership Hosts Virtual CARE Week

Cohort lessons and ten club events educate students on intersectionality during CARE Week

Helen O'Neal and Gabriella Gruber | Staff Writers

Although many students may not know it, intersectionality plays a major role in almost every aspect of their lives and the Lamorinda community.

Student-led clubs, Cohort teachers, and Leadership's Diversity Board collaborated to host events during the annual CARE Week from Nov. 16 to Nov. 21 for students and teachers to learn about and discuss intersectionality.

Monday's cohorts first introduced the theme of intersectionality, through a lesson, led by either cohort teachers or student CARE representatives. During this time, students and teachers also discussed the importance of personal identity and how it relates to race and culture.

"This meeting was a bit different [from usual cohort meetings] because we had more discussions," sophomore Mary Laska said, "I liked it a lot because I got to hear the perspective of many of my peers."

Some cohorts had CARE Leaders, students who volunteered, presented information on intersectionality, and helped lead discussions. Due to the limited number of CARE Leaders, in some cohorts, teachers taught the lesson instead of the leaders.

"[Sometimes] the CARE Leaders were the teachers. They prepared the facilitation and then delivered the curriculum. I received only high praise for CARE Leaders, and I know that my two were fantastic," said cohort and Leadership teacher Katherine Walton. "We didn't have enough CARE Leaders for every cohort. Teachers opted in to host CARE Leaders. We had more teachers than CARE Leaders."

Sophomore, junior, and senior students volunteered to be CARE Leaders. These CARE Leaders attended a lesson on intersectionality before leading their own lessons for their assigned cohorts.

"I decided to be a CARE Leader because I really wanted to make an impact on the Acalanes community. I thought it would be a perfect way to connect with people while also [helping to make] Acalanes a more inclusive space. I real-



Blueprint Photo/Anna Yiannikos

ly enjoyed meeting new people and becoming more informed on some of today's issues in our community," sophomore Kate Carter said.

Student-led clubs and the Leadership Diversity Board hosted nine lunchtime and after school events for CARE Week. The Black Student Union, Girl Up Club, Latinos Unidos Club, Asian American Club, and senior Miriya Huie hosted informational movies and discussions. The Queer Straight Alliance hosted an informational Kahoot and the Jewish Club hosted a Jeopardy on Jewish History. Additionally, Leadership hosted a Frosh Bonding activity and dialogue with guest speaker Lori Hayes.

Hayes talked about the importance of racial consciousness and how to be an upstander instead of a bystander.

"The things that [Hayes talked about] tearing me up because she truly mentioned the problems with today's society and how people should be treated better [and how] we can change and make a better community and environment. She also talked about how racism affects people's daily lives and how we should respect each other's identities, for example, our names," sophomore Hanna Mirzai.

The Queer Straight Alliance (QSA) also hosted an event for CARE Week. On Monday they hosted a Kahoot for students to learn about LGBTQ+ terms, history, important figures, and more.

"It is really important that our campus is welcoming to LGBTQ+ students and knowledgeable about how the LGBTQ+ experience often intersects with other marginalized groups' experiences. The LGBTQ+ community is so widespread across the globe and across so many

ages, abilities, socioeconomic statuses, and races that it is crucial that it's intersectional and recognizes the unique struggles of each and every person in the community," QSA Co-President and junior Autumn Long said.

The Jewish Club also hosted an educational event, a Jeopardy on Jewish culture and religion, on Thursday at lunch.

"Intersectionality to me is the aspects of a person's identity and how characteristics can create them. [Jewish Club] wanted to tie the theme of intersectionality with the awareness of Judaism on campus and to get students more educated on different religions," Jewish Club President and sophomore Rachel Gottfried said.

On Friday, senior and CARE Week leader Miriya Huie hosted a dialogue on cultural and identity-based erasure.

"Cultural and identity-based erasure refers to when someone doesn't acknowledge or accept an individual or group's identity trait," Miriya Huie said. "I hosted a dialogue for CARE Week after hearing that the Diversity Board wanted to hear more student voices. I thought it was a good opportunity for interested students to talk about things that they haven't had the opportunity to before."

Event organizers worked on ways to create an open environment for discussion over Zoom.

"[At the dialogue], other than Ms. Walton, who didn't have her camera on, there were no staff members at my event. This may have given students the confidence to be more critical of institutions or beliefs, as I find people are more willing to do in breakout rooms with fellow students than aloud with teachers," Miriya Huie said.

New Feature Allows Addition of Preferred Gender Pronouns on Zoom

A step forward in lessening the binary nature of American culture

Lianne Wang, Sammy Lee, and Juliet Becker | Staff Writers

For decades, sightings of boys in dresses or girls in suits stirred emotions of confusion and distaste in many. In this evolving age, however, individuals are beginning to learn the complexities of gender constructs to form a less discriminatory society, beginning with publicizing one's pronouns.

The Acalanes Wellness Center created a Google Form survey on Oct. 30, offering the option for students and staff to display their pronouns alongside their names on Zoom. The goal is to prevent pronoun confusion as well as boost allyship for the transgender and non-binary community.

Before the distribution of the Google Form, students lacked a way to change their Zoom handles due to security concerns revolving around student identification. However, they now have the option to put their pronouns with their Zoom names by filling out the form. Associate Principal Mike Plant then checks the form and manually edits each students' name on Zoom.

"We just needed to create a new process when Zoom names became locked for security reasons. Mr. Plant volunteered to manage the entries, and he was really happy to take that on," Wellness Intake Specialist Casey Sasner said.

Sasner shared the link to the Google Form through Canvas for all students and staff members to see. Wellness's efforts in publicizing the form through emails and CARE Workshops are in response to students' demands for it along with the growing popularity of displaying one's pronouns.

"We wanted to offer this option to support this emerging era of the civil rights movement on gender and identity. This is just one action but as a Wellness Center,



Blueprint Cartoon/Mara Korzeniowska

we respond to student needs," Wellness Director Allen Choi said.

Along with senior and student advocate Emily Ingram, Wellness also hopes to create a more aware and inclusive environment at Acalanes. The addition of pronouns on Zoom is only the first step in doing so.

"Introducing yourself with your pronouns or displaying them on Zoom helps to break down norms of assuming someone's gender based on their appearance," Ingram said. "[It] is a way for cisgender people to help avoid the ostracization of trans and non-binary individuals who have to introduce themselves with their pronouns to avoid being misgendered."

While cisgender persons go by pronouns that align with their birth sex, transgender individuals often use pronouns that do not correspond with their sex assigned at birth. Most commonly, people who identify as women prefer the usage of she/her, and those as men use he/him. Non-binary people whose gender identity conforms with neither male nor female typically use they/them pronouns.

"Just like a name, pronouns are how others refer to you, and you would want people to refer to you correctly. To give

an example, you wouldn't continually call someone named Autumn 'Amber' over and over again after they have corrected you. The same goes for pronouns," Queer Straight Alliance Club (QSA) President and junior Autumn Long said.

The aforementioned are three of the most used terms but by no means the only ones. Gender pronouns are based on personal preference and, to this degree, are not limited and can be used interchangeably. Nevertheless, transgender and non-binary students emphasize that everybody has pronouns so it is imperative, if not more than others, for cisgender students to add their pronouns on Zoom.

"When [cisgender] people [display] their pronouns, it lessens the anxiety of trans people that choose to display them and it also makes trans people less easily a target," Long said.

However, those who are trans or non-binary face the mentally-challenging struggle of others misgendering them daily.

"It is important for cisgender people to put pronouns as well in order to make trans and non-binary individuals who have to introduce themselves with their pronouns in order to avoid being misgendered feel less alienated in doing so and to help break down the gender construct that was originally created by cis people," Ingram

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Proposed Lafayette Bike-Safe Route

The organization Safe Route to Acalanes, hopes to create a protected bike path down Pleasant Hill Road

Zach Snyder and Michael Balmat | Staff Writers

Over the past 50 years, biking to school has dropped by about 35 percent. Many sophomores, juniors, and seniors drive instead, adding more cars to the roads.

While it is not a large population, some students bike to commute to and from school. The majority of these students ride on Pleasant Hill Road, which contains two on-ramps and two off-ramps for Highway 24, increasing the danger of this route.

Local parent Eric Law proposed and developed the Safe Route to Acalanes plan to form a protected and dedicated lane for bikers and pedestrians on highly populated roads, especially for student transportation. This plan focuses on implementing a protected biking path in the middle of Pleasant Hill Road to improve students' safety and their ability to bike and walk to school by 2025.

Pleasant Hill Road is a significant route for students and teachers commuting from cities across the Bay Area. However, it has some glaring flaws for those biking to Acalanes.

"That clover leaf passing Pleasant Hill Road is always terrifying because people want to get on the freeway and get off the freeway really fast, and the speed limit is too high there, and there is no continuous bike lane," English teacher Erik Honda said.

For many people, biking down Pleasant Hill Road is the only realistic way to get to Acalanes. The highway crossing danger deters people from biking to school, lowering the number of students who show any interest in using this form of transit.

"I felt it was very dangerous, and I was afraid to bike on that road, so I would have either had to bike up a very large hill or just taken a longer route, which would

not have been good enough for me timing-wise," sophomore Luke Brightbill said.

Recently, larger bike lanes were added to Pleasant Hill Road, giving bikers a more dedicated route to travel on. While this is beneficial to bikers, cars still cross over these lanes to access the highway, illegally driving in the lanes unaware or uncaring of the bike lane. The Safe Route to Acalanes plan displays a more protected and environmentally sustainable idea.

"For students, it will provide a safe, protected route. By providing a safer route, we hope it will encourage more students to ride their bikes and walk to Acalanes," Law said.

This proposed path will have guard rails or short fences on the side to protect cy-



Blueprint Photo/Emma Uffelman

clists from any interferences of the road. The path will also run directly down the middle of Pleasant Hill Road to hopefully keep the flow of traffic smooth.

"I would be more inclined to ride my bike with this new path because I would not have to worry so much about cars and time, and I can also get exercise before school starts, which would be refreshing," Brightbill said.

With the possible return to school in the spring semester, students see this path and biking as a great option to stay out of a car's confined spaces.

"This path has a huge chance of benefiting me personally because I live within biking distance of Acalanes, but I have never biked before because of the dangers of Pleasant Hill Road. Last year I car-pooled to school, and I think biking would be a more COVID-friendly option if we get the opportunity to go back to campus next semester," sophomore Emily Berkowitz said.

In addition to creating a safer travel route for cyclists, the Safe Route to Acalanes organization also aims to improve the environment in various ways.

"We are also exploring covering the path with solar panels to protect users from the sun and rain as well as generate electricity. For Lafayette parents, it will reduce the need to drive their students to Acalanes and buy them cars when they turn 16," Law said.

Various studies done by the Queensland government show the significant benefits of riding bikes over driving cars even for short distances. Biking to and from school each day can save around \$1,000 in just a car's transportation costs.

Besides saving money, biking conserves the roadway, therefore providing opportunities for less concrete and more plant life in urban areas.

However, some may see funding for this project as an issue. According to Law, construction costs will be around \$3.2 million. Funding will come from various sources, including grants, private donations, and potentially, revenue from the potential solar panel installations. Law also hopes that the city contributes to this project but so far there is no confirmation of the city's grant.

The cost of this large-scale project is not the only drawback. Considering the amount of construction it would take to create these new bike routes, the Safe Route to Acalanes plan is not scheduled to take full effect during this school year, but over a much longer period of time.

"Our goal is to complete construction of the bike/pedestrian path by August 2025," Law said.

While there are still some uncertainties surrounding the plan, teachers and students remain optimistic that if this does occur, it will greatly benefit the Lafayette community.

"There are so many people who live just a ten-minute bike ride from Acalanes and they still drive. They could get exercise, they could save the planet, they wouldn't have to drive that giant SUV and intimidate me. There are so many benefits," Honda said.



SHRIDAS SYSTEMS

Under pressure for more equity, the AUHSD continues to receive calls for more diverse curriculum

Shrida Pandey | Online News Editor

With Advanced Placement (AP) classes, honors classes, and academic extracurriculars, students have a vast range of course options. However, with the rising calls for racial equity and education, many community members demand an updated curriculum in the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD).

AUHSD students and staff continue to encourage implementing a new curriculum-directed towards racial equity in English and social science classes.

The process of curriculum change differs based on creating a new course or revising an old one.

To develop a new course, the District must develop a new class with the help of teachers and administrators. Once finalized, the five AUHSD school sites will evaluate the new course and give their feedback to the District. Finally, the District submits the class to the AUHSD Governing Board for final approval as well as to the University of California (UC) to see if it satisfies the A-G requirements, the UC entrance requirements.

For a current course, the District will work with teachers to change and update the curriculum. After, they will ask the Board for approval.

The process of creating a new curriculum is often difficult due to disagreements on if change is truly needed.

"To bring in new material, you have to throw things out and people don't necessarily want to let go of things they have done for a while. It's really coming to an agreement and building some consensus on what's the best [curriculum]," AUHSD superintendent John Nickerson said.

In the past, the District made progressive moves in diversifying curriculum, with the removal of Huckleberry Finn from English classrooms, alongside adding more literature written by people of color and women. Many students and staff, however, continue to insist that the District works

harder in terms of equity in the classroom.

"Even with the work the District has done [involving equity], students have not actually been getting educated about people of color and minority groups due to the whitewashing of our education system," junior Aviruchi Dawadi said.

Alongside this, students and staff point at the large lack of diversity specifically in history classes.

"Through taking [history classes at Acalanes], most of what we learn is about white men and European countries. Even though other races and continents played as big, if not bigger influences on our world today. We need actual education about issues that pertain to everyone, not just one group of people," junior Stella Bobrowsky said.

The initiative to reform the AUHSD sparked a collaboration between two community organizations, the Committee for Multicultural Educational Reform in the AUHSD (CMERA) and the AUHSD Grassroots Law Project (GLP). These groups advocate for the diversification of literature and social science education in the District to better reflect the multicultural reality of students.

"It is important that students are able to develop a well-rounded and accurate worldview and critical thinking skills, both of which we hope can be improved through curricular reform," CMERA member and AUHSD alumnus Carly Johnson said

The CMERA and GLP hope to make sure that change in educational curriculum actually happens in the AUHSD.

"We are working alongside the GLP and other parent/student organizations to keep the District on track with promises for reform made earlier this year. We hope to do this through surveys, focus groups, meetings with teachers and administrators, and petitions," Johnson said

Despite popular support towards a new equity curriculum, some students worry about student participation due to the District's new Ethnic Studies class and English 4 - Deconstructing Race class not



Blueprint Cartoon/Anna Yiannikos

receiving many signups.

"After discussions about equity, faculty made it seem like offering these [new] classes was a bold step in changing curriculum, but I didn't see any effort to promote them. It was just another option, and then suddenly it wasn't. I'd like to see ethnic studies and racial equity classes get just as much hype as European history," senior Madison Payne said.

To combat this, some believe that diversifying education takes priority and the District should require enrollment.

"[Equity education] are not things that only some students should be exposed to or some classes should have the conversation on. It is pretty obvious that we have a major race problem in the United States and we have [for centuries]...it needs to be throughout the curriculum not just in English classes [or a few electives]," English teacher Erik Honda said.

Many students hope the new curriculum changes will benefit the District as a whole.

"Not only does a more diverse curriculum provide representation for the minorities on our campus, but it also provides students with a better understanding of those around them. Eurocentric curriculum provides a very one-sided view of the world and neglects other very important parts of history and minority experiences," sophomore Hailey Stripling said.

Zoom Pronouns

Continued from 5

said.

The collective understanding that pronouns are complex, and not binary, has recently grown as people continue to put their pronouns in their social media bios and on other platforms as well. However, queer students are highlighting the necessity that this trend should continue because, prior to it, non-cis people who displayed their pronouns stood out and were attacked both online and in-person.

“Before this recent movement, only trans people put their pronouns [in] places, which made them a target for transphobic people. Additionally, it can be very scary and or anxiety-provoking for a trans person to be the only one in the room with their pronouns on display, so making it normal for everyone to put them everywhere helps to not single them out,” Long said.

Proponents of the Google Form are hopeful that the ability to place pronouns on Zoom will help put an end to harass-

ment towards trans and non-binary students.

“A student expressed concern in the first couple of days of the offer as their fear was that if only a few chose to share their pronouns, it could make those students feel alone... but we’ve now had over one-third of the community opt-in,” Sasner said.

As of Nov. 21, about 35 percent of Acalanes students completed the Google Form and had their pronouns added to their Zoom name. Students, including those within QSA, hope this number will continue to grow as the feature becomes further publicized.

“This is still just getting implemented and hopefully more people will continue to normalize this as the year goes on,” Ingram said.

Although adding one’s pronouns to their social media bio or Zoom name is a significant step, many emphasize that the efforts should not stop here.

“People can stand up for trans people if

they see transphobia, rally or go to marches, research and understand trans struggles, know what things to ask and what not to ask, donate to general LGBTQ+ organizations, and, it shouldn’t be extra, but respect trans peoples’ names and pronouns,” Long said.

QSA members are currently fighting against transphobia and homophobia outside of Acalanes by working to implement a similar workshop at Stanley Middle School. In addition, they are talking to other LGBTQ+ clubs in the Acalanes Union High School District to collaborate on future equity modules and teacher training. They strive to create a safer environment for people of all genders.

“If you’re a cisgender person who is not actively trying to break down the gender construct that alienates transgender and non-binary individuals then you are reinforcing and complicit of that alienation,” Ingram said.

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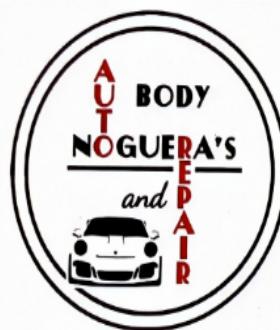
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Acalanes Community Divided Over Possible Return To In-Person Learning

The AUHSD Governing Board announces school re-openings into hybrid models

Stella Heo, Marisa Guerra Echeverria, Erin Hambidge | Online Editor-in Chief, Staff Writers

The days of in-person school, with its crowded hallways, sounds of laughter, and raised hands, are no longer a part of the new reality COVID-19 created. Instead, students find themselves behind screens, staring at the faces of their classmates who might as well be thousands of miles away. From their empty classrooms, teachers wait in expectant silence for an answer to their questions; a sea of red, muted microphones the only response. This is the reality we face, and it is one that students spent the past four months trying to adjust to.

After receiving community feedback, the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) Governing Board unanimously voted on Nov. 18 to reopen schools during the second semester in a revised hybrid learning model after two weeks of Contra Costa County being in the red tier, effectively altering the well-being of students and staff and eliciting mixed responses within the Acalanes community.

What is Hybrid Learning?

Similar to the previous hybrid learning plan set in July and October, students, except for those in special classes, such as Jazz Ensemble and other classes with specific needs, will be split alphabetically and placed into two cohorts, Cohort A and Cohort B. These cohorts come onto campus on alternating days, resulting in two days of in-person instruction and two days of virtual learning. Mondays will be fully remote, and students will meet virtually with their Cohort Academy before completing asynchronous assignments. By limiting the number of students who are on campus, the District hopes to ensure social distancing and prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

“The prevention is primarily through behavior and de-densifying the campus... [Every day] will have less than half of our current students [on campus]. We could come up with something different, but one thing [that] will be consistent with the hybrid model is we will de-densify,” Superintendent John Nickerson said.

Unlike the current distance learning model, each school day will start at 8:30 a.m., with 10-minute passing periods between 75-minute classes to allow time for classroom sanitation and bathroom use.

To minimize gatherings, lunch and Academy times will be staggered with students being placed into “Academy 1” and “Lunch 2” or “Academy 2” and “Lunch 1.”

In addition, the Administration plans on designating different hallways for different directions so students can social distance while walking around campus.

“Some of the flow of traffic will be controlled in the hallways. The site right now is finishing up that design of the flow of traffic, because obviously if the flow of traffic is going both ways, you’re going to encounter others face-to-face more than if it’s all flowing one direction,” Nickerson said.

The District also plans on having a Community Compact agreement and a contact-tracing method.

The Community Compact is an agreement that students and staff must sign to enter the hybrid-learning model. According to the draft, students must self-assess themselves for COVID-19 symptoms before arriving at school every day, stay at home if they are feeling ill, and wear a mask when on campus. If a student forgets to bring their mask to school, the AUHSD plans to provide one. Students and staff who are medically exempt from wearing a mask must wear a face shield with a drape or stay in distance learning.

If a student or staff member violates the contract, they will receive warnings from the school and may be placed into remote learning to not endanger their cohorts. The approach enables disciplinary measures that will apply to risky student behavior inside and outside of the classroom.

“If students are not willing to agree to our Community Compact, which involves physical distancing and wearing a mask, then they would not be allowed to do in-person learning and they would be put into distance learning. So we’ll have an expectation that everybody



that's doing in-person [learning] will follow the Compact, will mask, will adhere to the rule," Nickerson said.

The District will hire additional staff to ensure that students socially distance and follow the Community Compact guidelines.

"We are bringing in temporary, additional campus supervisors. So we'll have another person like [Campus Supervisor Andy McDonald] on campus to monitor student behavior, and if somebody has their mask off, asking them to put it back on. If people aren't distancing, asking them to distance," Nickerson said.

The contract also requires that all staff members take a COVID-19 test every week. Students and their families will have optional testing available during community events, but the tests will not be funded by the District.

"It's a [polymerase chain reaction] type test and it's a self-administered test under supervision. That's for the staff, and there's a 24-hour turnaround around for results," Nickerson said. "The community event [testing] for students or families, those are not school funded. We're just providing a venue, and then families will have to use whatever insurance that they have."

The District will also use contact tracing during hybrid learning in case a student or staff member displays COVID-19-like symptoms.

"If there is somebody who goes home sick with some symptoms that could be COVID, we try to make sure that person is tested as soon as possible, and then, if it's a positive case, then we go through contact tracing and identify anybody who was within six feet of that person for 15 or more minutes within a 24-hour period, and all of those people will be put on a quarantine," Nickerson said.

The school will notify parents of every positive case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality, and students who came in close contact must quarantine for 14 days.

Although the District is moving to hybrid learning with these precautions, students will still have the option to stay in distance learning. Students who choose not to return to in-person learning are assigned to Cohort C and will follow the schedule of either Cohort A or B in a remote format. During the two days where their peers partake in in-person learning, students in Cohort C will live-stream via Zoom into their classrooms. Teachers may also replace livestreaming with asynchronous activities at their own discretion, but the AUHSD emphasizes that Cohort C will also include synchronous instruction.

To help the students remaining in distance learning, Cohort C has dedicated times to talk to teachers via Zoom on Mondays, Thursdays, or during zero period depending on the teacher's discretion.

Immunocompromised teachers will be allowed to teach over a livestream to their classes as opposed to the District hiring long-term substitutes, which will allow students and staff in both in-person and fully remote models to keep their current schedules as well as minimize disruption. However, there will be substitutes present to supervise the in-person cohorts during the lessons.

"[Teachers] who have a medical verification that they would be at risk because of an immunocompromised situation [can teach virtually]. We're currently working on if there'll be any additional groups that are allowed and what the conditions would be," Nickerson said.

To better understand students' plans for the second semester, the District sent out an intent to return declaration on Nov. 19. Although students are supposed to stick with the choice they made on the declaration, minimal changes will be allowed during the first ten days of the start of the new schedule. Nickerson predicts it will be easier for students who initially chose in-person learning on the declaration to move to distance learning rather than going from distance learning to in-person learning.

"I would say it's easier to move from hybrid to distance, but at

least initially, we're hoping there's some space for folks to move from distance to hybrid. We aren't looking for a movement back and forth because that would be really challenging on the teachers, but there will be some times where essentially, somebody is in hybrid and they are on a two-week quarantine and they need to stay home, and they essentially become part of Cohort C during that time. So there will be some movement," Nickerson said.

Using the number of hybrid and distance learning commitments, the District will consider altering the master schedule as well as change class locations to accommodate different needs.

"The principals are looking at the numbers that are in this commitment and then determining how to split the cohorts in which classrooms. We want all of the students to have their same teachers and they'll keep their same schedule, but they might be in different classrooms depending on how it plays out," Nickerson said.

Why did the Board Choose Hybrid Learning?

The Board decided to transition into a hybrid schedule based on the current Contra Costa Health Services regulations and guidelines in place. With COVID-19 cases rising in most of California and the County moving up to the purple tier, the Board chose not to reopen schools until the County remains in the red tier for two weeks.

"For me, the most important thing is what we're allowed to do based on the county regulations and then what procedures we can put in place so that everyone can be safe while they're on campus," Governing Board Member Dr. Christopher Severson said.

The Board also considered how comfortable students and staff will feel on campus even if the District takes precautions to prevent COVID-19.

"While we might be able to provide a safe environment tomorrow for students, the perception of that may not be there, which can undermine the whole effort both with students and staff," Nickerson said.

Benefits of a Hybrid Learning Model

A week before the Board meeting on Oct. 21, parents met in downtown Lafayette on Oct. 13 to protest against distance learning. The protesters represented children from local elementary, middle, and high schools. Acalanes parent Jennifer Bielawski organized the event, hoping to motivate her fellow community members to speak up for their children.

"Sometimes, things are more important than what your experience is, and sometimes we have to use our voice to help others and speak for people who don't feel comfortable to speak up for themselves," Bielawski said.

Many protestors emphasized that some students don't feel safe at home and staying in distance learning could endanger their health and safety.

"For a lot of kids, school is their only safe place, and it really makes me sad that they don't have access to that. I think that the goal of the school should be to get those kids that need that safe space," Bielawski said.

Supporters of hybrid learning cite that in-person learning has many benefits that distance learning cannot replicate, some of them being the social and emotional support as well as a sense of community.

"I know that it would really help [my daughter] pay attention, understand what's happening in class, feel connected to her students, to other students and her teacher and her community. And so from that perspective, I do really think that distance learning and in-per-



son learning are not equivalent," Acalanes parent Marisa Medina said.

Several parents included that building relationships and memories are especially important for freshmen and seniors.

"You only get to be a senior in high school once. You only get to be a freshman in high school once, and these are years you just can't get back, and I think, for my family, it's worth the risk. I wish my daughter could have graduated and walked with her friends and have that experience because she'll never get that chance again," Bielawski said.

Students may also form new friendships during the scattered lunchtimes.

"I think [staggered times are] a really good idea. [Not seeing my friends is] not amazing, but I think I'd be able to make friends with those at my time," junior Ava Spiegler said.

In addition to fostering relationships and experiences, several supporters emphasize that hybrid learning will allow students to improve academically.

"I feel like learning in-class is so much different than learning over [a] screen. It's just not exactly easier, but just better in my opinion because there's more interaction and it's easier to understand and ask questions and things like that," sophomore Sophia Acuff said.

In-person learning will also allow students to quickly get answers and clarification from teachers.

"Oftentimes, I receive assignments with unclear due dates or titles or wordings. The tough part is, while most of these problems would be a quick question, online communication takes a while and it can be frustrating to email teachers just to clarify some wording or what citation is needed," senior Kai Feinberg said.

Many supporters believe that in-person learning may allow students to do hands-on activities and labs that teachers couldn't replicate in distance learning.

"On the Zooms now, we get to just see the labs through the camera of a computer. I think that being in-person and being able to see up close and in the moment what is happening would be better as I know personally that doing things through Zoom is not the same as in-person," sophomore Juan Ruiz-Sagrero said.

Detriments of a Hybrid Model

However beneficial the transition to hybrid learning may be, it may increase the possibility of a COVID-19 outbreak within the Acalanes community.

"So it's really not an 'if [there is a positive case of COVID-19 on-campus]', it's more 'when,'" Nickerson said.

Although the District plans to take measures to limit COVID-19 transmissions among students, many hybrid-learning opponents emphasize that students will not take the necessary precautions seriously.

"[Social distancing protocols in hybrid will] create another sense of self-isolation, such that yes, [students] are back, but it's hard to be the person that's like, 'guys, we need to stay farther apart'. No one wants to feel like they're nagging, restricting, or kind of telling other people to follow the rules... So I think it's going to be really hard for students to just navigate that social situation," Medina said.

In addition, while most hybrid learning advocates believe that in-person interaction will boost student mental and social health,



COVID-19 protocols will complicate student activities, including student lunchtime clubs.

"I'm not sure exactly what they intend to do for clubs but I know that I will not be able to conduct my club the way I do now since everyone in my club will have different lunchtimes. I feel like engagement will increase if we have to do it outside of school hours," Japan Club President and sophomore Jou Yoshida said.

With student clubs and regular student interaction called into question, many students feel that the strict COVID-19 protocols in hybrid will alienate and distance them even further from their friends.

"You can't hug your friends when you see them, and I think a lot [of being able] to see someone but not [being] able to do what's normally intuitive is going to feel more alienating than just seeing each other on-screen," Yoshida said. "I think it's going to sort of chip away at [students'] mental health when we can see what we want, but we can't exactly have it."

Several hybrid-learning opponents also believe that the rise of additional unknowns in hybrid learning could increase anxiety levels and deteriorate mental health even further.

"2020 has been a year of incredible uncertainty and chaos. I think a lot of us are really wanting assurance about what tomorrow is going to be like, and needing that consistency and stability, and safety in our lives. And I do worry that putting us into a hybrid model would jeopardize that for all of us, essentially," Ginsberg said.

Not only will the hybrid model worsen student health issues, but it forces most immunocompromised teachers to livestream their lessons into hybrid classes from home.

“I am not comfortable risking my health by going back to work [in-person]… However, I do know teachers that are older but don’t necessarily have [a history of a recent battle with cancer like me] who are also concerned [about their health in hybrid learning]. And I know teachers who live with someone who is a high-risk person, and then they might bring [COVID-19] home,” Acalanes Geometry and Pre-Calculus teacher Barbara Mochizuki said.

As a result of these risks and immunocompromised teachers’ ability to livestream into their classes, the District looks to hire in-person substitute teachers to supervise their in-person classes. However, the District currently faces a substitute shortage as many of Acalanes’ substitutes fear for their own health in the hybrid model.

“We’re hoping to have long-term commitments, but we have a real shortage of substitutes just because many of our substitutes are retired teachers and older retired people, and they’re not interested in coming back,” Nickerson said.

The transition to hybrid learning additionally complicates the situation for teachers with children. Many of these teachers may struggle to balance parenthood and their teaching duties in the new hybrid schedule as well.

“My husband’s at work every single day, so I’m at home with a full-time job and three kids and I’m doing all of their schooling with them, and of course making all of their meals and just trying to be both a parent and teacher full time. And that’s not easy to balance,” math and Computer Science teacher Jennifer Gilson said.

Teachers with younger children noted that they will rely on the local elementary and middle schools’ hybrid schedules to match up with their own at Acalanes, something the District has not guaranteed.

“If it ends up being something that’s completely misaligned with what I’m asked to do in terms of the hybrid schedule, then I suppose at that point, my answer would be no, I would have to stay as a distance learning teacher,” Gilson said.

Several community members also worry about how hybrid learning will impact learning, student engagement, and pressure placed on teachers. In the current hybrid-learning model approved in November, students will receive one in-person class per week for each class.

“From what I have heard from teachers outside this district currently teaching on the hybrid schedule, it is inferior to both 100 percent in-person...and distance learning. There is actually less contact with the students with hybrid and far more asynchronous [activities],” World History and AP Comparative Government teacher Joseph Schottland said.

The new hybrid learning model also forces teachers to manage multiple cohorts and class agendas at a time, a daunting task made worse with the stress of the transition itself.

Teachers emphasized that there will be discrepancies within the quality of learning across different hybrid cohorts.

“With the schedule bouncing back and forth between cohorts, inevitably, one cohort is going to get a lesson asynchronously while the other one is getting one live, and there’s going to be

some inequity there,” Gilson said.

Cohort C will also have Optional office hours on Mondays and Thursdays. This time is for students to check in with teachers or get help with classwork. These check-ins are at the teacher’s discretion, so it is not guaranteed that remote learners will have access to this resource, setting many students at a disadvantage to their hybrid-learning peers.

“[The new schedule has] an extremely imbalanced system of [Cohort C] support, and I think that’s unfair because you’re, in a sense...preventing students [in remote learning] from getting the educational help that they need, when the reason that they aren’t in-person could potentially be out of their control,” sophomore Joy Baker said.

Many teachers also emphasize that they do not have the space, components, or time to sanitize to keep hands-on activities safe.

“One of the lines [of the Community Compact] says [to] avoid sharing supplies and materials. We can’t really have a hands-on curriculum and abide by that [expectation],” Chemistry, Biotechnology, and Geology teacher Sydney Johnson said.

The transition to hybrid not only complicates hands-on academics; it also complicates musical curriculums. Choirs and bands can only perform cohesively in-person but face too many restrictions in hybrid classrooms to do so.

“Our wind instruments... have a lot more air going through them, and so the safety procedures and precautions that we have to take are much higher... Aerosol studies have shown that we need to take more breaks than other classes, so it would be more difficult for us to operate in a hybrid [learning model],” Instrumental Music teacher Lauren Gibson said.

Moving Forward

Although the target date to begin the hybrid learning model is Jan. 5, the District will only reopen schools if Contra Costa County is in the red tier for at least two weeks, which several community members don’t think will happen by January.

“Realistically, I doubt there’s going to be any transition in January. My guess is going to be mid-February to mid-March, but we’ll see how people behave and what happens with the surge and hopefully, things get better,” Nickerson said.

Above all of the uncertainty surrounding changes in curriculum and COVID-19 technicalities, many community members emphasize that it is important for both hybrid-learning advocates and opponents to remain flexible as hybrid learning approaches.

“One of the things that we all have to realize is that when you make a big change, some people are going to react to it well, and some are not, and we don’t know which will be the majority until we get there,” Mochizuki said.

Both sides of the struggle must understand the validity behind the community’s varying sentiments on hybrid learning and how they revolve around the health and wellbeing of Acalanes students and staff.

“We’re all entitled to different opinions. This is our health. This is the health of our siblings, our spouses, our children, our grandparents, and all of that. It’s a serious matter, and it’s not something that people are going to take lightly, and nor do I expect them to,” Bielawski said.

New Restrictions Disrupt Sports Camps

County lockdown results in sports practice and season delays

Connor Faust and Griffin Ruebner | Staff Writers

Acalanes sports participants faced difficult circumstances over the course of quarantine and its drastic effect on daily life. Sports programs have again been shut down after only a brief return to school, leaving athletes unsure of the future of their seasons.

As California experiences a surge in COVID-19 cases, on Dec. 4, Contra Costa County issued a shelter in place order leading to the cancellation of school athletic activities. Once sports programs are reopened, the Acalanes administration will re-introduce a limitation placed on the amount of sports camps students can take part in.

On Dec. 1, the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) issued a press release on the state of local athletic programs, some of which were originally set to begin their official seasons on Dec. 7.

“The California Department of Public Health has postponed the issuance of its updated youth sports guidance. The California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) does not expect the CDPH will issue any guidance allowing for schools to return to full practice and competition until after January 1, 2021, at the earliest. Thus, all full practice and competition start dates are officially on hold until updated guidance is issued,” the CIF said.

This escalated into a full shutdown of athletic programs by order of the county in accordance with their Stay Home order effective Dec. 6.

“To slow the spread of COVID-19 and prevent health-care systems from being overwhelmed, Contra Costa County, along with five other Bay Area counties, has implemented the State’s Regional Stay Home Order,” Contra Costa County said in a statement.

In an effort to more effectively enforce the Stay Home order and sports team hiatus, the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) closed all athletic facilities within all four high schools. For those that rely on the Acalanes campus for field or court space, the order requires them to find another area to practice.

“The directive that we were given by the district is that effective Sunday night, they want all facilities locked... and be locked down for 24 hours a day until we get out of the shelter in place,” Athletics Director Randy Takahashi said. “And the district felt that... they needed to take certain actions also, and that was closing down the sports programs, which by the way also includes any outside users. So all of the club teams that were using the pool and

field also have been notified that that will not be available.

Students playing in sports camps before the shutdown were unhappy to hear that they would not be able to continue practicing.

“I was sad to hear the news from the school because it was the only time I would spend outside my house, but I knew it should be done for our safety,” volleyball player and sophomore Liam Stancik said.

In addition to being a source of outdoor activity, sports acted as a way for athletes to entertain themselves during the otherwise dreary pandemic.

“It’s really annoying because [athletics] were one of the few activities that I could do, and now nothing is going on, but I understand that [the shutdown] is important for safety so I am willing to put up with it,” football player and sophomore Nathan Bennett said.

While facilities outside of Acalanes are not necessarily closed, the administration has made it clear that no organized in-person practices can be held anywhere.

“Our students and our coaches... are not to be organizing activities off-campus. I mean obviously, if they had Zoom meetings or Zoom workouts that’s different. But as far as actually meeting with them that would be a no,” Takahashi said.

If on Jan. 4th, Contra Costa County decides to lift the shelter in place order, sports camps would resume. Assuming the county would still be in the purple tier, in reference to Gavin Newsom’s recently implemented classification plan which classifies each county in California by case numbers, a new rule will be put into effect regarding the camps.

This rule restricts the number of sports camps that student-athletes can participate in for a three week period, after which they can either sign up again for the same sport or pick a different one. Before this period begins, students must register for the team roster. Additionally, students must stay within their cohort of teammates, consisting of 14 students to stay safe.

These measures hope to be proactive by limiting contact between students and keeping track of those that come in contact with one another for efficient case management.

“The reason back when we started [the single sport rule] in June, and now, is for exposure and contact tracing,” Athletics Director Randy Takahashi said. “Let’s say that a participant [in one camp] tested positive. Now, we



Blueprint Cartoon/Mara Korzeniowska

know exactly who that participant had contact with, but for example, when we expanded to two camps, it doubled the amount of exposure but we still knew which group [this person] was exposed to in each camp. So it's to limit exposure and for contact tracing.”

To enforce the rule, the athletics department plans to rely on a combination of student accountability and administrative checks. While Takahashi checks team rosters for duplicate players, coaches play a key role in recording student attendance and ensuring that they only attend the camp they register for.

“We have a huge part in the rule actually being implemented and making sure that we are actually following guidelines...we are pretty aware of what student-athletes we have in our group that attend other camps, so we usually let them know in a very non-biased way, what is going to happen and that they have to choose. We are specifically, as coaches, making those groups within our sports,” Women’s Volleyball Coach Haley Walsh said.

For some athletes, this new regulation means dropping a particular sport for the season. While this doesn’t necessarily mean student-athletes can’t take part in programs outside of school, it severely limits the number of students that can participate in multiple sports. Some of the sports practicing at the same time include football, girls basket-

ball, baseball, softball, as well as boys and girls leagues for volleyball, lacrosse, soccer, and tennis.

“To be completely honest I just enjoy playing football more, and I believe that the pre-season practices for football are more important than for volleyball,” sophomore Victor Nicolacakis said. “[Choosing a practice is] honestly not that bad, it’s mostly just like if we do end up having a volleyball season I am going to be rusty. All it is is that I am not able to practice with the team.”

These new restrictions cause concerns among multi-sport athletes about losing playing time on one or more sports once the season starts.

“I do think it will [affect my playing time] and I am expecting that it will affect it because if I was the coach I would play the players who come to every practice and choose soccer to be their main sport... I understand that playing time comes with commitment,” soccer and lacrosse player and junior Elise Flagg said.

However, Acalanes clarified that student choices will not influence team lineups until the beginning of the official season practices.

“In a normal year, we evaluate players when official football practice starts and play the best players at each position,” varsity football head coach Floyd Burnsed said.

Certain sports received more attention than others during the quarantine. As a result, some teams predict to experience an uptick in player attendance. However, this affects other teams completely differently, with certain teams predicted to lose athletes with the reinstatement of the single-sport rule.

“Other coaches like to joke that volleyball is the camp that takes all the athletes... ironically we have seen an increase in player turnout at least for volleyball,” Walsh said.

Despite the revival of preventative measures to fight the spread of COVID-19, Acalanes finds that the administration cannot regulate all issues in regards to athlete safety, such as participation in travel and club programs.

“It’s not realistic for us to manage every athlete’s outside activity... We know that there are athletes that are in club programs that are going to be outside of the area, and they are in full-blown games, scrimmages, practices, we know that. But at the same time, we can’t manage all of that on the outside. We can’t implement our restrictions somewhere else where the conditions are different, and that’s what’s tough to try to manage,” Takahashi said.

The shutdown of sports camps follows the recent upward trend of COVID-19 cases and the slow reclosure of California. Due to this new wave of cases, attempts by the school to revive any sense of normality in what is a completely unorthodox year are starting to crumble. However, many maintain hope that the shutdown does not signify the end of athletics for the year.

“Right now [practicing is] not really that critical, because none of us are getting ready to play games... it would become crucial when we have starting dates,” Burnsed said.

The Exacerbation Of Seasonal Depression

As the cold, sunless winter months approach, times that are typically filled with family and friends are a distant memory of the past

Juliet Baker, Kyle Bielawski, and Connor Faust | Staff Writers

In a COVID-free world, students travelled, spent time with loved ones, and attended parties throughout the holiday season. This year, however, new shelter-in-place orders impact the Acalanes community, with little possibility of a normal holiday season due to worsening COVID-19 cases in the Bay Area.

As winter arrives, many experience Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), an annual type of depression related to the seasons, more than in prior years due to social distancing guidelines and a lack of interpersonal connection.

SAD is a type of depression that links depressive symptoms to colder weather and the winter season. In addition, certain symptoms are more prevalent with SAD than other classifications of depression, such as increased appetite and drowsiness.

SAD is also driven by the decreased amount of sunlight, often resulting in lower levels of serotonin, which doctors link to depressive tendencies, and high levels of melatonin, a hormone that often causes drowsiness. Psychologists say the seasonal decrease of light results in these hormonal imbalances, changing many people's habits and moods during the colder seasons.

"[SAD] is very related to the daylight. In the summer, [people] get access to longer days, warmer weather and are generally more active. Exercise produces serotonin which helps with depression, because if you have more serotonin in your brain that helps protect you from depression," child psychologist Jennifer Crossland said.

Quarantine guidelines restrict in-person interaction, which only worsens this matter. With officials advising the avoidance of large family gatherings, some noted increased depression as a result of both the lack of holiday interaction and quarantine's solitary nature.

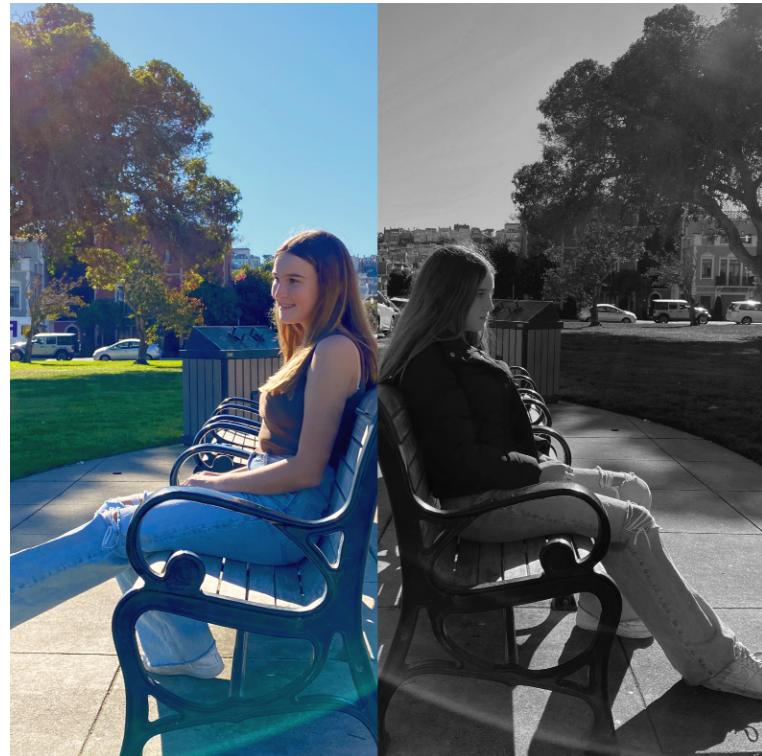
"I would imagine that lack of social engagement could certainly exacerbate the impacts of seasonal depression," Acalanes Wellness Support V. Pham said. "Seasonal depression would make it more challenging to cope with the realities of the pandemic, and vice versa. It could be a very unfortunate feedback cycle."

The stress induced by the pandemic acts as not only a cause for SAD, but depression as a whole.

"When you don't have a lot of certainty about when [COVID-19] is going to be over, people start feeling very hopeless, and hopelessness is a big marker for depression," Crossland said.

To students, these feelings of depression aren't apparent in just one or two areas of life. SAD can affect students from the moment they wake up through the time their head hits the pillow for months on end.

"For me it's episodes of days that are filled with low energy, irrationality, and really just not feeling like myself...it's different from



Blueprint Graphic / Mara Korzeniowska

clinical [depression] because the days feel like they are repeating themselves in a constant cycle, rather than all my days feeling like they're melting together," sophomore Gema Villafan-Perez said.

Although doctors haven't discovered specific causes for SAD, they have observed and documented a few risk factors. Such factors include a family history of SAD or depression, geographic locations which restrict or lessen access to sunlight, and a previously existing condition such as depression or bipolar disorder.

During different times, doctors recommend certain methods to cope with SAD, including the use of devices such as light boxes or spending more time outside.

"I would suggest forming study dates or study groups with friends. This satisfies the need for social time, while also being productive with schoolwork," Pham said. "Just remind yourself that you're experiencing something seasonal, and that means it has an endpoint. Things will not be this way forever. We're going to see the light at the end of the tunnel soon."

For the afflicted student community, something as simple as spending time with friends or exercise can be an escape from the affects of SAD.

"I can surround myself with people whose energies aren't dark like the outside. I can do things to take my mind off of it by doing art therapy or even yoga," Villafan-Perez said.

Many find that the most efficient way to combat seasonal depression is spending time outside during daylight hours.

"Get outside. Get outside as much as [possible], even if it's just to walk around the neighborhood, getting that sunlight is key. If you can get sunlight, even if it's just 30 minutes of cardio activity, that really does help buffer that [seasonal depression]" Crossland said.

The Switch to Cautionary Shopping Habits

Lafayette community members adjust how they shop due to COVID-19

Juliana Upp and Nastia Grits | Staff Writers

Window shopping once consisted of going out and browsing storefronts in the mall, but with new shelter-in-place orders, people must leave behind these old ways and shop from home.

Many Lafayette community members shifted to online shopping this holiday season to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the early months of the pandemic, the number of online shoppers dramatically increased when stores suddenly closed down.

According to a study from McKinsey and Company, a management consulting firm, online shopping activity surged once the pandemic hit. The number of people who turned to buying groceries online increased by 41 percent, the demand for various house furniture increased by 30 percent, and the number of customers purchasing clothing online increased by 19 percent.

Many students also turned to online shopping to avoid the risk of COVID-19 while shopping in-person.

“My online shopping has increased since COVID-19 because it’s a higher risk to be out and in stores when they are open,” junior Parker Delaney said.

With the upcoming holiday season, many students must choose between staying home or going out and experiencing the joy of holiday shopping. For some, this choice may depend on which is easier and more convenient.

“I think it’s easier to buy Christmas gifts now because when you’re going in-person you have to go to certain stores and walk everywhere. There are sometimes lines as well, and it’s just a lot more time consuming,” sophomore Ally Drake said. “On the other hand, if you’re shopping online then you can just see everything really quickly and it’s basically just faster and easier.”

Other students reported that online shopping takes more time than shopping in-person, as there is oftentimes much more variety online.

“I also usually put multiple things in my cart but don’t end up getting them,” Delaney said.

This is likely due to an overwhelming

amount of choices, causing people to question what they purchase.

“There are a million choices. It keeps you on your phone and it makes you so that you’re probably not as happy with your decision... because you get this like ‘oh my gosh, I could have had this,’” AP Psychology teacher Nader Jazayeri said.

With this rise in online shopping, new opportunities arose for smaller online businesses. Many students even started online businesses where they sell handmade items.

“I started [my business] around the time when all the protests were going on and I wanted to help out in any way I could so I decided to start making jewelry...It was also a good way to put my time and energy into something because of COVID,” sophomore Michelle Dwinell said.

Other students take the stress-free route of online business, and turn to selling their used items on popular marketplace websites like Depop or Poshmark.

“It gives me something to do when I’m at home and super bored, and it’s really easy, so I don’t get stressed out about it. Also, I have a little conversation with people when they’re like ‘Hi, I’d like to come pick this up’ so that’s a really positive experience,” Drake said.

Just like consumers, larger corporations

adapted to this change in shopping and shifted to selling online as well.

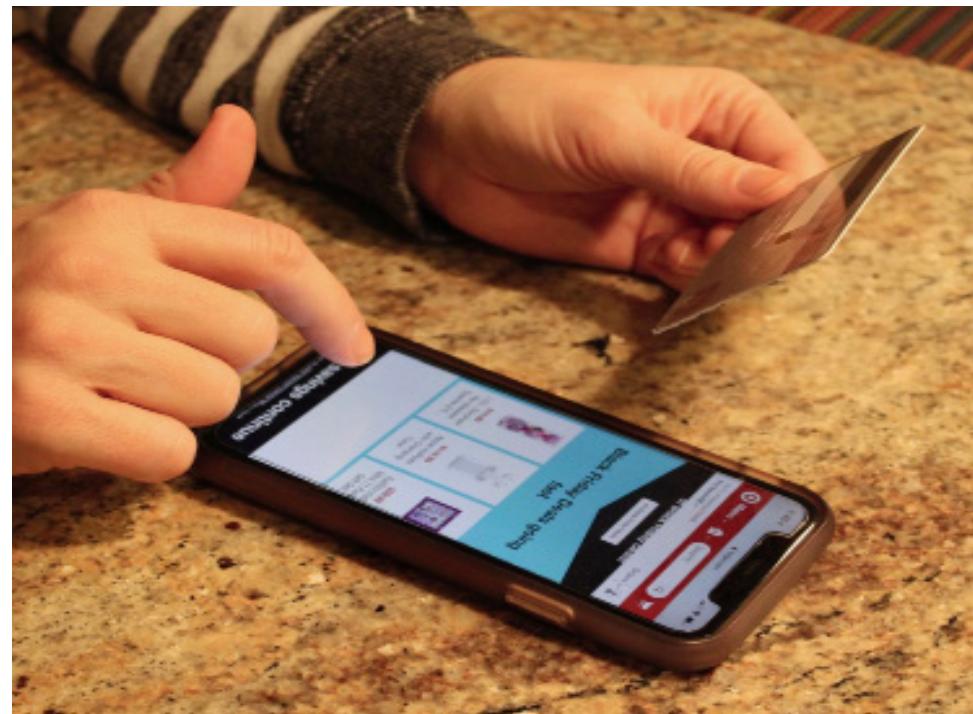
“We’ve seen an unprecedented amount of sales online for sure. It used to be 80 percent of sales happen in stores, and now it’s less than 50 for Gap Inc., so that’s a big shift,” Senior Marketing Director at Gap Inc. Alycia Doshi said.

Doshi explains how Gap Inc. takes measures to make customers comfortable, offering a variety of options for purchases.

“We’re trying to enable all those ways of shopping and meet the customer where they are. If they want to come in stores, or they can buy online and pick it up, or they can just pull up, pop their trunk and pick it up curbside. We’re just shipping a lot more product from our distribution centers too,” Doshi said.

Unfortunately, the increase of online shopping could permanently impact the environment, with the increased packaging and shipping processes.

“Online shopping is increasing waste - cardboard and packing waste along with carbon emission wastes from the deliveries,” Biology teacher Lori Tewksbury said. “This is becoming a greater issue with COVID, with more and more people using online shopping for basics such as groceries and basic necessities to avoid the exposure of in-person shopping.”



Blueprint Graphic / Mara Korzenioswka

Some students recognized this and adapted to better serve the environment.

"Instead of moving to online shopping, I decided to stop online shopping for a couple of reasons. One was for the environment and the second was that I'd decided in January to spend less money on clothes," junior Sofia Gonzalez said. "I made a rule to only thrift or buy clothes from closed loop clothing brands or online thrift stores. Mostly I avoid online shopping and when Goodwill and in-person thrift stores reopened I went to them a lot."

With social distancing guidelines, many teenagers stay home rather than go out, yet many still purchase clothes as often as before the pandemic.

"[Teenagers are] still trying to find their identity and their role, so they have this need to fit in, and online shopping, or any sort of behavior online has to do with that burst of dopamine that gets going in the brain," Jazayeri said.

Many people are aware of the negative impact of online shopping, yet most shoppers find it more convenient during the pandemic. People utilize online shopping to help lessen COVID cases, and also make their lives easier in this chaotic time.

"It's also important to note that right now, since we're in a pandemic, the technology is amazing. If you're an at-risk person, you can literally stay home and push a couple buttons on your phone and your food gets delivered to you... There are a lot of positive effects of online shopping," Jazayeri said.



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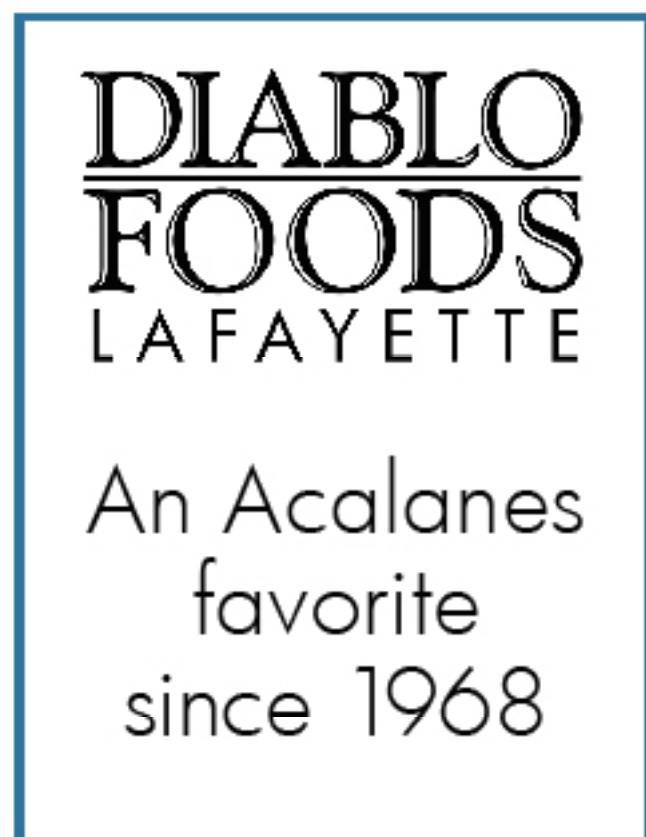
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Staying Local During the Holiday Season

COVID-19 and social distancing mandates limit students and staff traveling over break

Andrew Habas and August Walker |
Staff Writers

As COVID-19 cases increase by the day, families in Lafayette must make the arduous decision between staying home or risking their and others' health by traveling for the holidays.

The last couple months were stressful for many, as the idea of staying home, wearing masks, and social distancing was a foreign concept before the pandemic started in March. The holiday season is typically spent with family and friends and acts as a special opportunity to reconnect, but with COVID cases surging, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other health specialists emphasize the importance of limiting social interaction to prevent the spread of COVID.

"At the individual household level, what's at stake is basically the increased chance of one of your loved ones becoming sick and then being hospitalized and dying," CDC's COVID-19 Incident Manager Henry Walke said.

The risks of traveling and interacting with people outside of one's immediate family forced many members of the Acalanes community to forgo their usual travel plans for the holidays, during both Thanksgiving and winter break.

"I'm just staying here, we're not visiting anyone and no one's coming over. Normally we'd visit some of my grandparents or they'd come here but for safety reasons everyone's been staying [at home]," math teacher Janice Lund said.

Many students also cancelled previous plans for the holidays.

"My family had a trip to Europe planned, Italy and Germany more specifically, but due to COVID, we had to cancel the whole thing," sophomore Luke Dulik said.

Canceling significant trips adds to stress, as most find it problematic to cancel trips, flights, and hotels they already paid for.



Blueprint Graphic / Emma Uffelman

Despite this, Dulik explains how his family vacationed by going on small road trips, and acknowledges that the risk of local travel is much lower than other forms of travel.

"[Driving to Carmel] is a lot less risky, obviously, than flying out of the state for a trip," Dulik said.

While many people want to vacation out of state, students know that California still offers endless trip opportunities including Lake Tahoe, countless beaches, and the redwoods.

Some take advantage of these opportunities frequently, while other students and teachers do not have time for such trips.

School and extracurricular activities often occupy students during the week, and weekends are often too short for excursions. Oftentimes, these longer breaks are their only opportunities to travel and explore new places, all while staying local and safe.

"I know some people would prefer to stay alone, but there's only so much interaction you can do just within your family without going crazy. People are built for social interaction, and if I could get out there instead of just being stuck outside I absolutely would," sophomore James Brophy said

Recipe of The Issue: Flourless Chocolate Torte

Julia Poole | Online Feature Editor

This gluten-free chocolate torte is the PERFECT holiday treat.

Passed down from Gourmet magazine, this recipe is the most sinful, rich, and *trigger warning* moist, chocolate cake out there. I'd recommend skipping the glaze and serving the delicious chocolate torte plain, right after it comes out of the oven. Enjoy!

CAKE INGREDIENTS:

12 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, chopped
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup unsalted butter, cut into pieces
 6 large eggs, separated
 12 tablespoons sugar
 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Butter a 9-inch-diameter springform pan. Line the bottom of the pan with parchment paper or waxed paper. Wrap outside of the pan with foil.

Stir chocolate and butter in a heavy medium saucepan over low heat until melted and smooth. Remove from heat. Cool to lukewarm, stirring often.

Using an electric mixer, beat egg yolks and 6 tablespoons of sugar in a large bowl until mixture is very thick and pale, about 3 minutes. Fold lukewarm chocolate mixture into yolk mixture, then fold in vanilla extract.

Beat egg whites in another large bowl until soft peaks form. Gradually add remaining 6 tablespoons sugar, beating until medium-firm peaks form. Fold egg whites into chocolate mixture in 3 additions. Pour batter into the prepared pan.

Bake the cake until the top is puffed and cracked, and the tester inserted into the center comes out with a few moist crumbs attached, about 50 minutes. Cool cake in pan on rack.

Gently press down the crusty top to make an evenly thick cake. Using a small knife, cut around the pan sides to loosen the cake. Remove pan sides. Place a 9-inch-diameter tart pan bottom or cardboard round on the cake. Invert cake onto tart-pan bottom. Peel off parchment paper.

GLAZE INGREDIENTS:

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup whipping cream
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dark corn syrup
 9 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, finely chopped
 Chocolate shavings or gold-brushed chocolate leaves

DIRECTIONS:

Bring the cream and corn syrup to a simmer in a medium saucepan. Remove from heat. Add chocolate and whisk until melted and smooth. Spread $\frac{1}{2}$ cup glaze smoothly over the top and sides of the cake. Freeze until almost set, about 3 minutes. Pour remaining glaze over cake and chill until glaze is firm, about 1 hour.

OPTIONAL: Add chocolate shavings or gold leaves to the top. Serve at room temperature (or right out of the oven, if you're feeling risky).

Blueprint Photos/Julia Poole



Widgets: The Helpful Gizmo That Improves 2020

Apple's 14.2 update allows students to further optimize and customize their home screens

Ella Alpert | Arts Editor and Liaison Editor

From app shortcuts to 90s nostalgia themed screens, Apple's IOS 14 offers both organizational and aesthetic benefits for many users.

After the highly anticipated update's release on Sep. 16 people discovered Apple's newest addition to their homepages. Widgets, debatably the most popular enhancement, are app-like extensions that allow further modification of the Iphone's central interface.

The widgets' adjustable scales of small, medium, and large sizing encourage unique and individual page configurations. Photo and clock widgets with flexible placements stimulate color and creativity that past updates failed to fulfill. "With the update I've completely customized the layout of my home screen. I'm really happy with how it looks now, and it's much more colorful and personal than just the app covers," junior Brooke Blacklidge said.

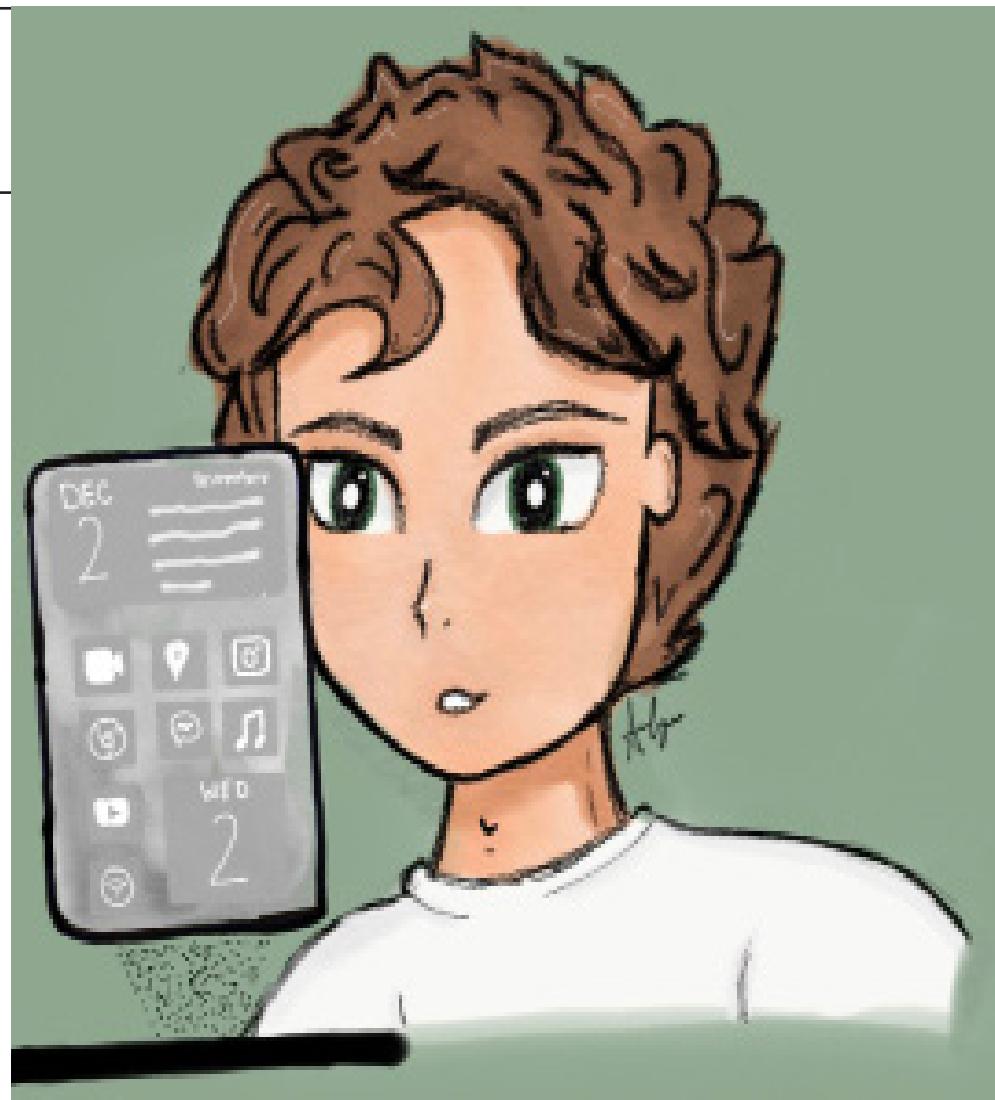
With adaptability comes individuality; students note that the update also promotes unique and original compositions.

"I was really excited when Apple released the widget update because I love being able to make things my own. Of course you could already change your wallpaper but that wasn't enough for me," Blacklidge said.

To some, the appeal of curating their screen remains enticing yet the tedious work that goes into the process is not.

"I think the whole concept of widgets is really cool. It gives people a chance to express themselves with each photo and background they choose. I love seeing everyone's different taste in design when they show me their widgets," senior Maddie Rogers said. "I would definitely use widgets if I wasn't such a perfectionist and also lazy. I know if I did it, I wouldn't stop until everything was perfect."

Not only do widgets permit users to rearrange the entire look of their screen, but also provide helpful shortcuts. Apps like Spotify, Google, and Headspace dedicate code to display small blurbs of their apps. Apple even offers widgets that display battery percentage and screen time to help



keep people aware of their phone usage.

"I think the main appeal to widgets is that people want to navigate around their phone more efficiently, and using the widgets, they don't have to search through their home screen to get where they want to be," junior Benjy Braunstein said.

Adhering to this outlook, some students utilize the update for purely effective purposes.

"I like using the widgets to quickly check things instead of going into the actual app. It is a nice way to really efficiently scroll through things," junior Riley Daggs said. "I love being able to listen to my playlists really easily and when I'm driving I can just click the widget."

Along with the design elements of widgets, Apple introduced an app library

Blueprint Graphic/Arlyne Noguera

which further helps users navigate their screens. By swiping all the way to the right, users unlock a search engine which helps find their desired program, without sifting through their home screens.

Although the update produced some new goodies, students believe Apple achieved nothing ultimately too influential.

"The update was anticlimactic, but that isn't to say nothing good came from it. Widgets are cool, I'm just saying this is nothing too unique," junior Devin Miniello said. "I do hope though that companies see people generally like additions like the widgets, and they make more fun updates like that in the future."

Burrows: A Touching Pixar Short

Acalanes alum Madeline Sharafian directs a Pixar short film

Jacque Peacock, Haley Rurka, and Irene Meklin | Staff Writers



Courtesy Photo/Madeline Sharafian

A young girl on a family hike chases a cluster of cotton-tailed rabbits through tall grass until she reaches their burrow. As they disappear into the ground, she wonders what happens beyond the small, dark opening she sees.

Inspired by hikes in Briones as a child, Acalanes graduate Madeline Sharafian creates “Burrow,” an animated short film for all ages to enjoy. While on these adventures, she’d see cotton-tailed rabbits popping in and out of their underground homes.

“I always tried to catch up to them and I would just look down that empty hole, because I knew they were in there. I just wish I could have seen what it was like underneath [the ground],” Sharafian said.

Sharafian attended CalArts in Santa Clarita, California. There, she gained knowledge about the animation process and honed her

artistic skills. During her time at school, she also created three short films. One of the three, titled “Omelette,” went viral. The film’s triumph opened her eyes to how much work goes into animation.

“...it’s about a little dog that makes an omelette. So at least I had already sort of checked off that box, like I do know I could make something, but I also was very aware of how much hard work went into that. I knew it meant nights and weekends; you kind of have to pour everything into it to get something done,” Sharafian said.

After Sharafian’s two years at CalArts, she began an internship at Pixar in 2013. While interning, Sharafian worked on a myriad of other popular projects.

“... at Pixar, I’ve worked on, ‘Coco’ and ‘Onward.’ Before that I was on Cartoon Network and I worked on ‘We Bare Bears,’ Sharafian said.

Along with these prosperous animation ventures, Sharafian creates shorts of her own. Her inspiration for her Pixar original, “Burrow,” stems from her childhood nickname, Rabbit. In a preview of the new short, Sharafian describes the project.

“It’s about a little rabbit who’s building her first burrow and she encounters her neighbors. She starts to second-guess herself and accidentally digs herself a little too deep into isolation and has to learn how to ask for help,” Sharafian said.

Pixar’s SparkShorts program sets aside funding for two short films each year, giving directors full creative freedom over their projects. Lindsey Collins, head of the SparkShorts studios, showed interest in Sharafian’s short.

“I was so afraid that she would pick someone else before me that I sort of like flung my whole body through the door and try to get chosen. And it was kind of weird, it didn’t feel real. It didn’t feel real until I had boarded it, that I actually had it,” Sharafian said.

Sharafian took advantage of this opportunity, and explained the creative process that brings her ideas to life.

“I sort of write it out like a script without words. Then I go to a process we call thumbnailing, where we draw a little version of the shot that we want like super super small really rough,” Sharafian said. “I thumbnail out the whole short and then after thumbnailing I go into storyboarding.”

She hopes that the Acalanes community feels connected to “Burrow” knowing that

her inspiration came from a hiking trail in Happy Valley. Sharafian also mentions that in a final scene, one of her team members, Bill Cone, designed a background that encapsulates her memories of the California hills. Sharafian specifically wanted a hand drawn film because her background in that animation style allowed her to get hands on in the project’s editing.

“I didn’t do a lot of the animating because I’m not very good at animating, but I did do cleanup. I would take an animators reference drawing because they really know what they’re doing and I would draw clean tidy lines on top of it,” Sharafian said.

Together the team, led by Sharafian, displays the heartwarming product of their hard work.

“I love watching it and being able to say who exactly drew that background and who exactly animated that shot. I remember walking into everyone’s office and the moments of finaling every one of those things, and how good it felt to be proud along with everyone else who worked on it,” Sharafian said.

Sharafian does not currently plan to produce another animated original, although she thoroughly enjoys her job at Pixar. She proclaimed her excitement for the debut of upcoming films.

“There’s so much that I can’t reveal that I wish I could. It’s very exciting. I’m just enjoying the ride,” Sharafian said.

As an Acalanes alum, she shares her advice for students who experiment with animation and those who wish to pursue a career at Pixar or another studio.

“Some concrete advice would be to keep a sketchbook. That’s been invaluable and so helpful. I was looking through my old sketchbooks recently because I was moving, and I found old drawings from 2014 when I had started to draw a rabbit underground. These things, and these ideas, will sneak up on you over the years,” Sharafian said.

Sharafian advises that anyone seeking to enter the world of animation, draw for themselves and not for others.

“My portfolio for my Pixar internship was a little more feminine at the time than I thought Pixar was looking for, but I think it was those elements that landed me the internship,” Sharafian said.

Sharafian’s short film premieres on December 25th along with Pixar’s new movie, “Soul.”

Zoom Style: At Home, Every Week is Fashion Week

Students experiment with new fashion and aesthetics free from judgment over Zoom

Aisha Mohanty | Staff Writer

With everyday life now viewed in portrait mode, Acalanes students find new ways to express themselves through Zoom style.

Before the global pandemic students would wake up early in the morning before attending class, leaving many with short windows of time to get dressed. Now students can easily pick up their devices and join a Zoom meeting, allocating more time to accessorize and style outfits before each class period.

One of the most popular ways students project individuality is through the use of creative makeup. Bold eyeliners, sparkling eyeshadows, and even a popping lip color, give students the opportunity to achieve unique looks.

Some even go to the artistic extent of adding small doodles to their makeup design or drawing creative detailing from previous decades.

“I honestly love makeup now. During school, I never really wore that much makeup, but now I’ve just become so inspired to bring out

my artistic side with it. I love doing fun and colorful looks that I didn’t have the confidence to do before,” senior Sterling Stewart said.

Makeup is not the only trend that prospers in quarantine. Decorative accessories make debuts during each Zoom session. Whether it be with spiritual crystals, rugged chains, or colorful charms, jewelry serves as magnificent addition to one’s appearance through a computer screen.

“I have all of this jewelry that I would buy at flea markets and thrift stores that I didn’t wear as much, until now. Before, I thought a lot of jewelry might be considered too flashy, but I realize now that it really adds something to the look that differs from clothing,” junior Kira Wood said.

With a view from the torso up, students utilize half clothing, an idea that promotes both innovation and comfort. As a new medium for clothing, students reveal graphic tees, colored prints, or even vintage tops of all sorts, while also given the freedom to wear casual bottoms below the camera’s frame.

“I wear sweatpants and pajama pants almost everyday to class. Yet I also have the opportunity to dress fashionably. There’s less of a barrier between dress up and

dress down. Instead, people just dress however they want,” senior Erin Meade said.

Because students can simply roll out of bed and log onto class, they often gravitate toward informal attire such as sweatshirts and sweatpants. Rather than spending hours getting ready, students can use this time to focus on school and other responsibilities.

“What I really love is that athleisure has become super popular so it will still be considered dressing fashionably. It also makes me so much more at ease and relaxed while I’m doing my work, and sometimes I just don’t have the energy or motivation to dress fancy,” Stewart said.

Whether it be through experimental pieces or loungewear, Zoom reigns free of social conformity. With less face-to-face interaction, students deviate from merely following the current trends and instead pursue a style that’s more unique to them.

“The one thing I love about distance learning is that I have the freedom to dress however I want for each class. Now I can wake up in the morning and try out new looks and aesthetics free from judgment,” senior Keily Sarica said.

Blueprint Graphic/Seth Kline



Borat Subsequent Movie Film: Good Time?

Sacha Baron Cohen's new film brings laughter to students during the pandemic

Miller Smith and Aaron Vaserman | Staff Writers

Wawa wewa! After 14 years, Borat returns and is better than ever. Amidst America's current political strife comedic genius Sacha Baron Cohen revives his most iconic character.

In September, Amazon announced the sequel to Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan. Excitement quickly spread across the world as people anticipated the release of Cohen's new masterpiece.

However, upon its premiere in October, the film received worse reviews than the original. With an 82 percent rating on Rotten Tomatoes, the movie's slight disappointment caused debate amongst fans about which rendition reigns supreme.

"I thought the first movie was a lot funnier than the sequel, but I think the pranks and jokes were a lot better in the sequel. Nothing can beat the original, it's one of the funniest movies of all time," sophomore Max Thoams said.

The movie's combination of real life U.S. politicians with prank comedy appealed to many viewers. In the film, Borat's mission is to bring his fifteen-year-old daughter, Tutat, played by 24 year old Maria Bakalova, to U.S. Vice President Mike Pence.

After traveling across the United States, Borat finally finds Vice President Pence at the Conservative Poll Action Conference. Borat disguises himself as President Donald Trump and disrupts the conference by demanding that Pence accepts his daughter.

"I thought the scene was really funny and brought some comedy to the recently rough U.S. political climate," sophomore Isabella Aris-Dumas said.

But when politics and comedy mix, controversy does not trail far behind. Following his rejection from Pence, Borat finds a new target in former New York mayor and current personal attorney for Donald Trump, Rudy Giuliani.

After a prank interview with Tutat, viewers



Blueprint Graphic/Freschta Warres

watch a concerning scene which features Giuliani in the bedroom with the supposed 15 year old. Giuliani begins to lay on a bed, proceeding to begin unbuttoning his pants while allegedly touching his genitals.

Borat interrupts the scene by running into the room and saying, "she's 15. She's too old for you."

Following the release of the film, Giuliani received severe backlash from viewers and the media. In an interview with the New York Post, Giuliani claims that he only tried to take off a microphone and tuck his shirt in. Following the dicey scene, Bakalova received an interview with the New York Times.

"I was kind of scared that something would happen. But fortunately, we escaped," Bakalova said.

Bakalova also stated that she trusted Cohen to keep her safe, even though she felt nervous in the uncomfortable and strange situation with Giuliani. Keep in mind Bakalova plays a 15-year-old girl, and leaves it to viewers to infer what would happen if Borat didn't save her from Giuliani.

Since then the release of the film the scene reached national headlines and

caused controversy across the globe as watchers see the reputation of Giuliani rapidly decline.

"I haven't even seen the film, just that part and I felt as though the scene was disturbing. The young woman is only 15 years old and the man is much older, which automatically made me uncomfortable. There's absolutely no excuse for what Giuliani did in that scene," freshman Maggie O'Toole said.

The film is known for inappropriate comedy, and is generally not suited for younger viewers. Although, many protest the film is overly raunchy for even today's political climate.

"I think the film is inappropriate for today's climate but this is what makes it funny. The outside the box comedy is what drew me to the movie in the first place," junior Jon Clark said.

Cohen delivered this film in the heart of a rough year for all, bringing a much needed laugh to families stuck at home. Whether or not the film is appropriate, it produces a hearty laugh; and as Borat likes to say, it is "very nice."

Top Ten Must See Historical Dramas

No time machine needed!

Here's our pick of the best historical dramas

Sabrina Agazzi and Julia Poole | Copy Editor and Online Feature Editor

Contrary to popular belief, historical dramas are not just for moms. Shows like Downton Abbey, The Crown, and Hidden Figures provide a window into the past and allow teens to broaden their perspective by educating themselves about unknown or glorified historical events. Here is a list of the top ten historical dramas that everyone needs to watch right now. Get ready for an afternoon of high tea, smuggling potatoes, and space travel.

“Downton Abbey”

From the first moment a spectacular tracking shot follows servants through the halls of Downton Abbey, the viewers are in love. Giving birth to new fashion trends, baked goods, and famous one-liners, “Downton Abbey” set the bar for every historical drama to come. Stepping into the world of high tea, witty banter, and the roaring twenties, the show masterfully balances a rigid social hierarchy with rich storylines that make ordinary relationships come alive. Written by Julian Fellowes, each episode weaves five rich storylines together brilliantly, creating a unique and remarkable show.

“The Crown”

An instant phenomenon, Netflix’s “The Crown” analyzes the struggles and scandals of Queen Elizabeth II’s reign. The show begins with her coronation in 1953, each season occurring in the following decade. This unique pace gives audiences a view into many major historical events and iconic social movements. “The Crown” is known for its extravagant scenes and detailed historical accuracy. Not only does the drama focus on the British royals and other historical figures, but it also reveals controversial and untold details of their lives. The result is a true masterpiece.

Netflix released the highly anticipated season four on Nov. 15, introducing audiences to two new major characters: Princess Diana and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

“The first season was amazing, but it was set in the 50s. I couldn’t wait for the following seasons with Princess Diana! I’m binge-watching it,” junior Stella Bobrowsky said.

“The Queen’s Gambit”

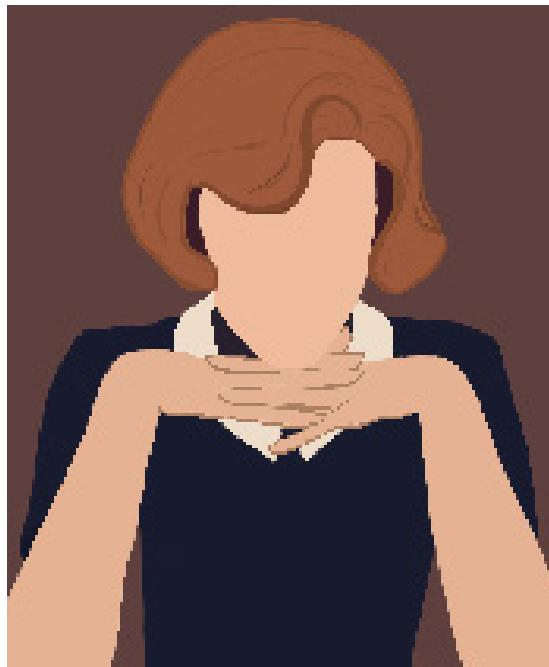
Released on Netflix on Oct. 23, “The

Queen’s Gambit” exploded in popularity the minute it premiered on Netflix. Viewers loved its striking cinematography, feminist ideals, and a raw, gritty look at addiction. Based after the novel by Walter Tevis, the program follows fictional prodigy Beth Harmon through the male-dominated world of chess.

According to the International Chess Federation (FIDE), in the ten days following the release of “The Queen’s Gambit,” searches for the words “chess sets” on eBay surged 273 percent, or every six seconds.

The show automatically appealed to many Acalanes students who appreciate the hobby.

“The Queen’s Gambit has also brought an interest to the chess world, as many new casual players have gotten interested in the game, even allowing chess.



Blueprint Graphic/Sabrina Agazzi

com to create [artificial intelligence] that mirrors the play of Beth Harmon on the show. I think that ‘The Queen’s Gambit’ is a good thing for our active but hidden community of chess players around the world,” junior Elijah Pockell-Wilson said.

“Anne with an E”

This Netflix original series shows the world through a creative lens: the eyes of a free-spirited and passionate young girl, Anne. Although it is set in a small town on Prince Edward Island, Canada in the late 19th century, “Anne with an E” tackles current issues. Throughout its three seasons the show portrays racism, consent, indigenous history, gender bias and more in a modern yet historically accurate way.

“‘Anne with an E’ is a great show because it combines a childhood story written a century ago and modern ideas. My favorite thing about the show is that Anne is such a feminist icon,” junior Ella Thompson said.

“Hidden Figures”

Released on Jan. 6, 2017, at first glance “Hidden Figures” looks like another movie monetizing the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and rising ‘woke’ America. However, the gorgeous costume and set design, delightful comedic relief, and eye-opening look at the microaggressions faced by African-American women outshines most other discrimination period pieces. Pleasing history buffs, feminists, and all who need a little hope for the future, “Hidden Figures” takes a popular storyline and delivers it beautifully. Centering on three African-American women working as “human computers” for NASA during the height of racial tension in the 1960s, the film uplifts its viewers and provides a sense of hope for an equal future.

“I really love Hidden Figures because it shows a really underrated story about women in science. I’ve watched it several times, and it’s so interesting to see what it was like to work in the space program when it was just beginning,” junior Katrina Ortman said.

“Little Women” (2019)

Written by Louisa May Alcott in 1868, “Little Women” is a delightful historic classic that produced seven film adaptations in an attempt to do Alcott’s story justice. Although taking the same storyline for the seventh time already puts the creators of “Little Women (2019)” at a disadvantage, they dazzled viewers with a modern take on the classic tale. What sets this adaptation apart is the cinematography: entire scenes rely completely on the scenery and music, which truly transports viewers into the March’s living room. One can almost imagine dancing ecstatically with Jo and Laurie, listening to Jo’s empowering speeches on women’s rights, and feeling the unwavering love and affection of Mrs. March.

“Mad Men”

“Mad Men” was television royalty from when it premiered in 2007 to the series finale in 2015. Although the popularity of the show decreased since its finale, it is one of the highest quality historic TV series to date. The series begins in New York City in 1960, and lasts the duration of the decade. The series covers wars, assassinations, major social movements, and more. Throughout its seven seasons, each character evolves uniquely. From their fashion sense to state of mind, no character stays the same.

“Reign”

Continued on 27

Quote of The Issue

“Perhaps the best hope for the future of mankind is that ways will be found of increasing the scope and intensity of sympathy” - Bertrand Russell

Kayli Harley | Online Editor-in-Chief

When we are young we learn what it means to win and to lose. As victors we pump our fists in the air, dance with joy, and shout with satisfaction. As losers we throw our helmets to the ground, push the boardgame off the table, and yell in frustration.

If the victors get too excited, or the losers are too upset, we tell them to show compassion. We either share an understanding of pride or resentment.

We think: how dare they tell me not to celebrate. I am not obligated to comfort them. How dare they tell me I am not allowed to feel

disappointed. It's not my job to praise their accomplishment. Why do their feelings triumph over mine?

This process is how we learn because, at one point, we feel both. To understand what it means to win, we have to lose. To understand what it means to lose, we have to win. It's not our responsibility to control how others react, but we must remember that our reactions are not the only ones possible.

It's not about undermining your emotions but rather about making them clearer. When we understand both sides of a story, we come out with a complete tale.

Recently, half of the United States experienced a resounding victory and the other half tasted defeat. The outcome of the 2020 Presidential Election allowed millions of people to sigh with relief and caused others to fume with rage. So, where do we go from here? We go forward.

There are problems in this country that reach past the boundaries of party lines. Our political stances should not strip us of our compassion. We can disagree about the path we choose, but the moment we start attacking the humanity of others, we begin fighting more than a political battle.

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Set in the 16th century, the TV show “Reign” takes place in a royal French court and focuses on the infamous Mary, Queen of Scots and her marriage to Prince Francis, the future King of France. A historical romance premiering in 2013, the show contains four captivating seasons focusing on the lives of royal families and couples. The show depicts French society and focuses on historical issues facing France at the time. Later seasons focus on Mary, and her return to Scotland to reclaim her overtaken throne. Full of suspense and deceit, “Reign” is a must-see for anyone interested in the exciting dynamics of the French Court.

“On the Basis of Sex”

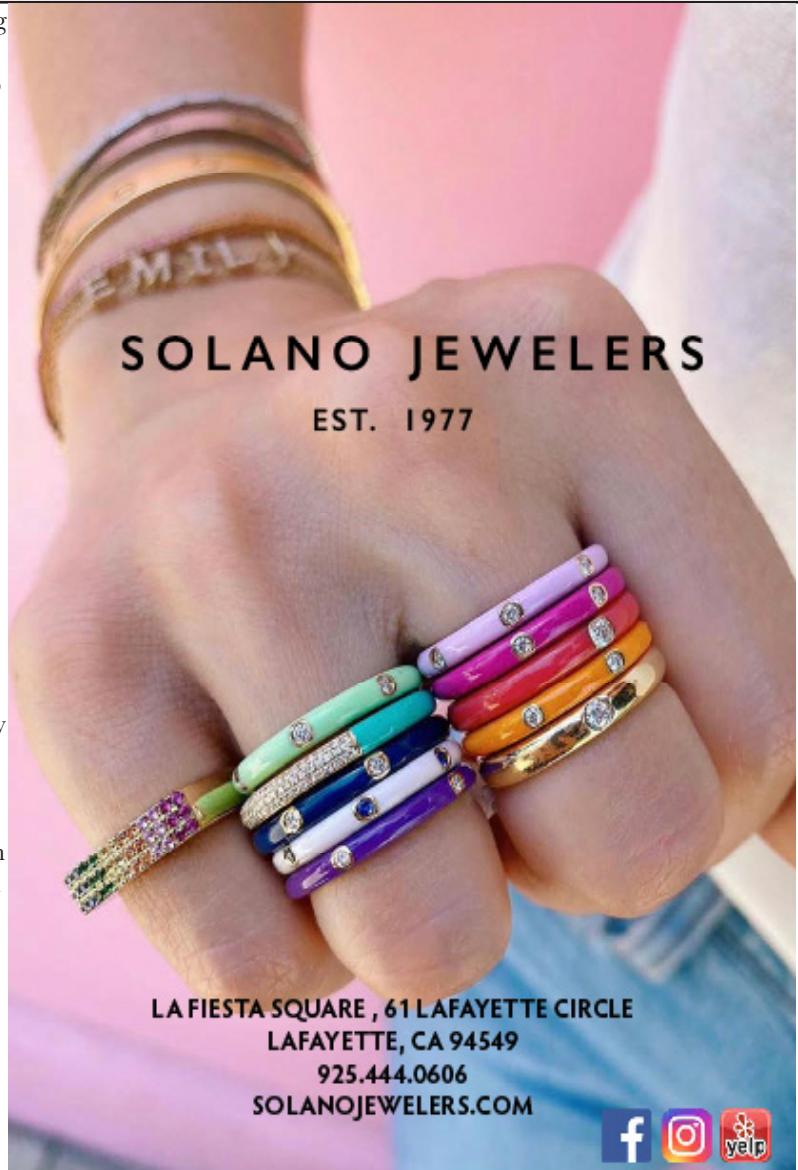
As the world mourns the death of the unforgettable Ruth Bader Ginsburg (RBG), one can only wish to hear her inspiring words one last time. “On the Basis of Sex” does not have RBG herself, but it does tell the truly inspiring story of her life. Seeing through RBG’s eyes gives the viewer an even greater appreciation for the struggles and hardships RBG overcame to become the second woman ever to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. Balancing societal pressures, discrimination, and raising a family, “On the Basis of Sex” delivers

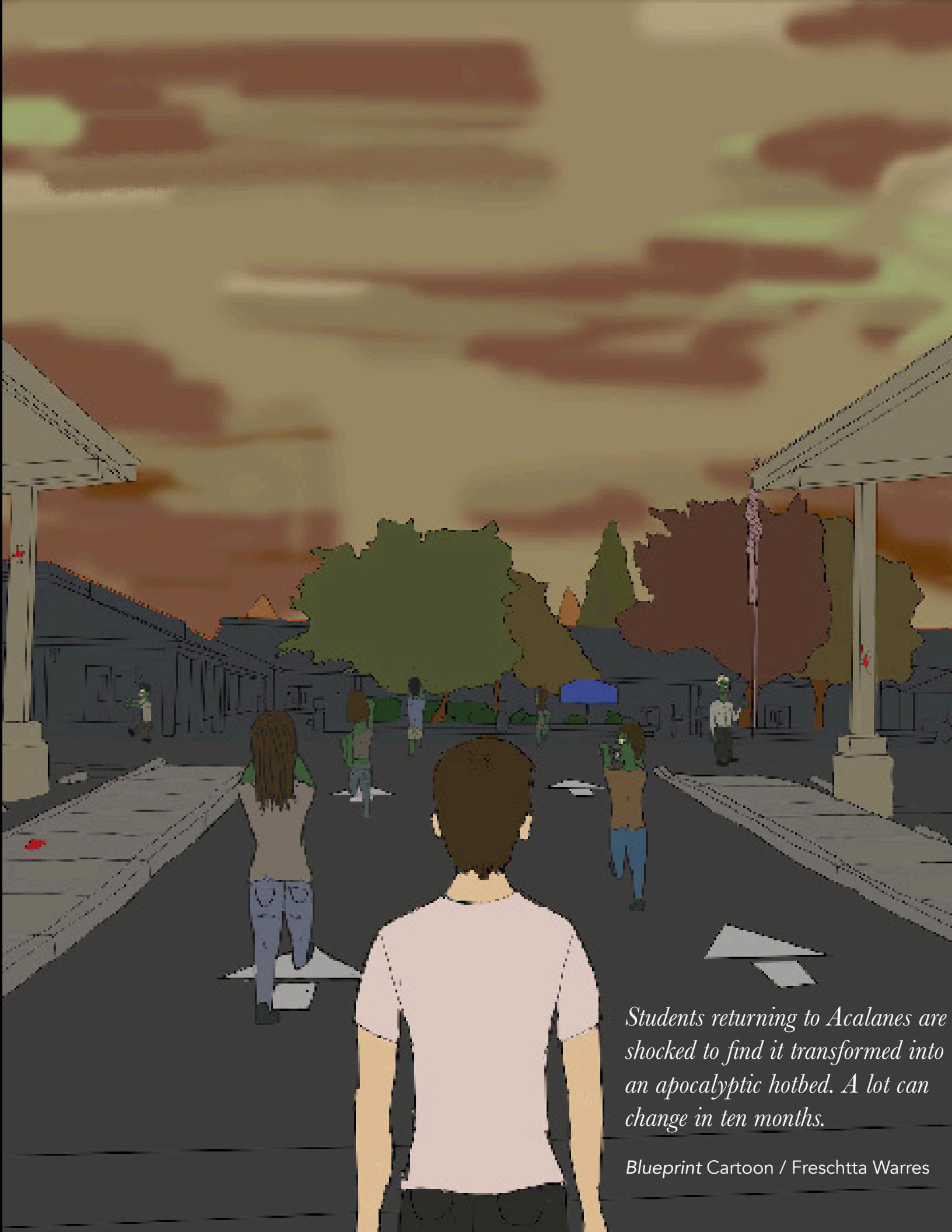
RBG’s experiences while inspiring young people to “fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you.”

“I like ‘On the Basis of Sex’ because it really shows a lot of female empowerment which is very important in today’s society and it also brings up the conversation of sexism and basic female rights which even though that movie was placed some time ago, female rights and justice are still a big topic in today’s political and societal atmosphere,” junior Meghan Foster said.

“The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society”

Although dozens of movies attempt to recreate the horrors of war, no movie portrays war quite like “The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society”. The oddly specific title bodes for an unconventional war story, following Juliet Ashton, a writer in 1946, who stumbles across British island of Guernsey recovering from the war. The whimsical tale seamlessly balances the hardships of war with the strength and perseverance of the Guernsey community, all sprinkled with a touch of romance.





Students returning to Acalanes are shocked to find it transformed into an apocalyptic hotbed. A lot can change in ten months.

Blueprint Cartoon / Freschta Warres

The Flaws of the Disney Princess Franchise

Why the Disney Princesses do not deserve the idolization they receive

Erin Hambridge | Staff Writer

As a young girl, I wanted nothing more than to be a Disney Princess. They were my idols, women I wanted to be when I grew up. I watched their movies endlessly, my younger self captivated by the beauty, grace, and endless charm they possessed. My entire childhood I've dressed up as them for Halloween; the sparkly dresses and small high heels I stuffed into my closet still remind me of the little girl I was, and who I am no longer.

As I look at my current role models, women who are smart and strong without the help of a man or a tiara, I see the inherent flaws in the Disney Princesses. The deeper issue with the Disney Princesses stems from their lack of ethnic representation, the unrealistic beauty standards they set for young girls, and their outdated messages reminiscent of a far less progressive society.

There is a common misconception that Disney is responsible for creating the Princesses and their respective storylines. However, Ariel and Snow White originated from folklore hundreds of years old, written by renowned artists such as Hans Christian Anderson

and the Grimm Brothers.

Disney adapted traditional tales like those into animated feature films, starting with Snow White in 1937. Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty followed several years later, creating the first generation of Disney Princesses.

It is important to understand that the Disney Princesses are a franchise created for the purpose of making money. What was originally a series of animated films has become a billion dollar franchise, consisting of beauty products, clothing and more.

The danger of Disney Princesses comes from their widespread marketing, and consequently, the large audiences they attract. Their advertising targets children who are susceptible to and internalize Disney's harmful standards.

Young girls are especially targeted by the Disney franchise, hugely impacting their body image. All princesses are characterized by the trademark hourglass waist and a small perky nose, reinforcing the belief that all women who want to be attractive have to meet those standards. Another issue stems from the portrayal of the villains who are usually fat and "ugly"



compared to the beautiful heroine. Associating these two body types with the respective hero and villain stereotype teaches young girls to equate skininess with good and fatness with bad.

Beside body image, the Disney Princesses contain many other harmful messages targeted towards young girls, such as the classic the prince/princess archetype that portrays the lead heroine as dependent on a Prince for survival. In many of the traditional movies, the princess relies on their prince, who they barely know, to save them.

Going back to appearances, most of those princes look the same, with brown hair, chiseled features and fair skin that embodies the perfect Prince Charming ideal, enforcing male body expectations as well. Instead of teaching young girls self-sufficiency or resilience, the Disney Princesses show them that all they need is a man to survive.

This dependency continues on into the plot line, where the main goal of many of the princesses is to find true love and marry. In some cases like Cinderella it is even more trivial, like attending a ball, demonstrating how shallow Disney intended the princesses to be. This limited portrayal of a woman's purpose teaches young girls that the objective in life is to

find love and get married. Marriage and true love are beautiful things, but Disney ties them to a woman's worth and happiness and girls absorb this message from a very young age.

Elsa, who is a part of the Frozen franchise (not the classic Disney franchise), is an example of what an improved, if still slightly flawed, princess looks like. She is powerful in her own right and relies on another woman, her sister, for guidance. Elsa is also one of the few princesses whose plot line does not revolve around the traditional norm of true love. Elsa is not perfect however; she has an hourglass waist and fair skin that promotes an unrealistic body type to young girls.

My favorite princess was always Belle because much like her, I had brown hair and white skin. My blonde friends preferred Cinderella and the redheads preferred Ariel. I never thought much of it at the time; it seemed perfectly natural for me to look up to someone who looked just like me, and because of my own appearance, that was never a problem. Disney did not give everyone that same gift of representation. Tiana (African-American), Jasmine (Arab), Mulan (Chinese), and Pocahontas (Native-American)



Why We Should Not Return To School

Quarantining is tough, but an unprepared return would have horrific results

Tom Bequette | Online Sports Editor

Ever since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, we, as a community, have been rigorously challenged. COVID-19 has exhausted the world emotionally, mentally, physically, economically, and politically for roughly nine months now. It is no wonder why many people now find themselves eager to return to social environments like school, even in a limited capacity. Yet the community is not ready for a return to school. If we try to force a return it could create an even larger disaster for Lamorinda as a whole.

It is important to outline the current state of the coronavirus in the U.S. In short, it's everywhere.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. has reported 14.2 million cases as of December 4, the most of any country. These cases only reflect those who have been tested though, and epidemiologists estimate the real number is much higher.

Daily cases continue to skyrocket too, up more than 70 percent nationwide since the beginning of November. Here's another way to put it: one in every 378 people in the U.S. test positive for COVID-19 each week.

These numbers likely will not improve over the holidays, where families feel inclined to reunite and the weather gets colder, forcing gatherings inside where the virus is more infectious.

Looking at the history of the pandemic, it does not make sense to keep students away from school for so long, only to return when the disease is at its worst point yet.

Contra Costa County (CCC) reflects the nationwide statistics as it is currently in the purple tier, indicating widespread transmission,

along with all but seven California counties. Health officials instituted a stay-at-home order for the greater Bay Area, effective Dec. 6.

We cannot depend on schools to keep students safe; the institutions that have taught in-person have had undesirable results. Notre Dame switched to an online education and after one week more than 400 students tested positive for COVID. Michigan State and the University of North Carolina's attempts at in-person teaching produced similar results while Purdue and Syracuse had to suspend many of their students for not obeying COVID safety protocols. If major institutions like Notre Dame and Michigan State can't properly contain the virus, then Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) certainly cannot contain it.

The AUHSD governing board

approved the current hybrid reopening plan on November 18. This plan splits students into two cohorts, one of which would go to campus on alternating days while the other would learn synchronously through Zoom from their homes.

Despite the convenience for students, this schedule shift asks a lot of teachers. They have to simultaneously teach an in-person class as well as a virtual one, as opposed to our current system which allows them to have all their students in one place. This raises other concerns; teachers will simultaneously have to ensure their students adhere to COVID-19 protocols while teaching their lesson.

Furthermore, a person with COVID-19 usually infects two other people, and so a return to school would require perfect execution of every protocol from students and teachers alike to prevent it from spreading.

No matter how much we emphasize the importance of social distancing, it is irrational to expect students to follow it perfectly. Students will still hang out after

school and won't follow every rule perfectly. While the stay-at-home order is stronger than a mere recommendation it is unlikely residents will follow it as diligently as they did in the spring. The government can only limit business and public gatherings but that fails to help when the majority of infections stem from small, personal, indoor gatherings.

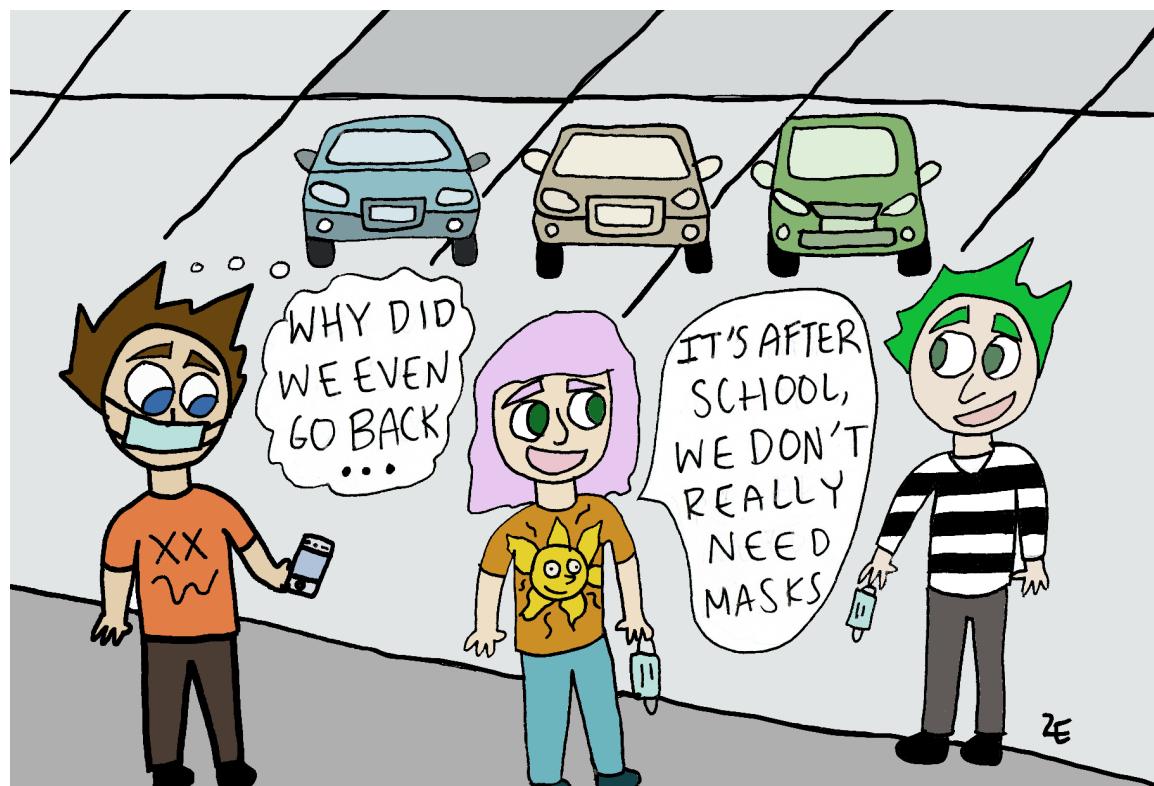
A lot of progress has been made in the vaccine sector, but many problems still exist to make us hesitate even if this vaccine is everything it is hyped up to be.

First, distribution would present many problems as it will take time to properly distribute the vaccine to our entire community, especially with how the vaccine requires a -70 Celsius temperature and a \$20,000 case to be stored.

There have been limited, if any, trials of both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines on children, and children and young adults are the last to be vaccinated.

Even if people have access to the vaccine, some will refuse it

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Why We Should Return to School

The benefits to reopening schools outweigh the arguments for keeping students at home

Contributing Writer | Acalanes Student

Lockdown is important; it is unacceptable to willingly spread disease for frivolous activities, thereby putting peers, family members, and overall communities at the mercy of one rule breaker. It is important, however, to evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of shutting down society and that one sector not worth shutting down again is education.

Despite the challenges posed governments must prioritize school reopenings and return to the traditional learning process for students to properly progress in their academic careers.

On March 13, 2020, California schools shut down and quickly switched from in-person to distance learning; this was easier said than done. Teachers have had to educate their students and help them reach the same benchmarks as previous years but in an entirely new environment. In distance learning, teacher and student connection and communication are incredibly difficult, if not impossible. This does not take into account if students even attend virtual classes at all.

According to Bellwether Education Partners, a nonprofit focused on ensuring students receive equal opportunities, almost 3 million students have not attended any formal education — virtual or in-person — since March.

In Washington D.C., 60 percent of students lacked devices and 27 percent lacked the internet connection needed to participate in distance learning. In Los Angeles, 15-20 percent of students did not access any educational materials in the Spring of 2020.

We simply cannot participate in distance learning any longer when so many students fall behind

through no fault of their own.

Students, especially in low income areas, face more challenges. Many kids rely on public school systems for breakfast and lunch, a warm or cold shelter to shield them from extreme environments, and a refuge if they live in an unstable household. Without school often these kids no longer have essential resources.

Furthermore the students that have access to distance learning and their primary needs met still are not learning as much as they did in-person.

According to EducationData.org, a website that works to make data from sources such as the World Bank, National Center for Education Statistics, and schools from all across the country more understandable, the quality of distance learning reaches half of its possible potential. Issues such as inconsistent instruction, poor content, little collaborative work, and poor administrative knowledge of technology, greatly hinder students' understanding of the curriculum.

The New York Times reported that Houston had a 31 point increase in students failing two or more classes this year, and in Washington D.C., data shows a steep decline in elementary schoolers meeting literacy benchmarks.

Additionally, of the high school class of 2020 who intended to go to a four year institution, 8 percent changed their plans due to COVID-19. If students no longer attend higher education due to the lack of sufficient education to prepare them for it, it can have ripple effects throughout the economy and society in coming years.

Despite the overall increase



in COVID-19 cases worldwide, schools have shown to be a small point of infection. According to the New York Times, only 0.17 percent of tests from New York City public schools came back positive.

Adding onto that, promising vaccines lie on the horizon. Pfizer and BioNTech produced a vaccine with efficacy rates over 90 with no severe side effects and Moderna's vaccine has almost 95 percent efficacy rates.

Turning back to the school reopening itself, many critics point to the failed reopenings of higher education schools. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill sent students home after they were only on campus for a week and the University of Alabama has seen over 2,500 cases since they reopened.

This is not a fair comparison though; Acalanes is a school of about 1,400 students and 120 faculty members who are on campus for eight hours a day. Universities have thousands more students who eat in dining halls and reside in dorms and shared bathrooms and apartments making it easy for the virus to spread quickly. It is simply not fair to use those as a relative example for a high school.

Student's health is suffering due to distance learning too, both physically and emotionally. According to Jennifer Katzen-

stein, the director of psychology and neuropsychology at the John Hopkins All Children's Hospital, increased screen time leads to bad posture and eye strain, and can also disrupt circadian rhythms. On the mental side, distance learning adds environmental distractions that are hard to clear and increased screen time in turn raises rates of depression, anxiety, and attention span issues.

The Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) has been working endlessly trying to reopen schools in a safe and timely manner while balancing the needs of students, faculty, parents, and local regulations alike. At this point, it is clear the common need is to reopen schools.

The reopening plan includes longer passing periods for students to wash their hands and for sanitization of the classrooms, split lunches to minimize time for students to congregate, and smaller class sizes of cohorts to lessen the size of students on campus.

Nothing will ever be perfect, but the precautions AUHSD has put in place, paired with the low transmission rates of children, weighed against the drawbacks of not returning to school reveal a clear winner.

Assisted by Andrew Habas, Staff Writer

Positive Racism: The Model Minority Myth

The model minority stereotype no longer fits Asian Americans today

Shrida Pandey | Online News Editor

I spoke to a friend about racial stereotypes a couple weeks ago. We mentioned instances of discrimination we had encountered like, “all Asians are bad at driving” or the time when a teacher asked me, “what caste are you from?” When I brought up the Asian-American model minority stereotype in response, however, her demeanor changed; “that isn’t exactly a harmful stereotype though,” she said. Although I knew she meant well, this type of thinking causes multitudes of harm to the Asian American community.

The seemingly positive “model minority myth” negatively impacts Asian-Americans’ mental health, hurts their education, and erases them from discussions about racism.

The model minority myth originates from the American immigration system. In 1965, Lyndon B. Johnson passed the Immigration and Nationality Act, basing American immigration on the value and skills people would bring to the United States. Yet the bill still limited the amount of people immigrating from each foreign country.

As a result, immigrants from populous Asian countries like China and India, faced heavy competition among one another, causing most of the Asian people immigrating to America to be highly educated or wealthy. This slowly created a stereotype of Asians as a “model minority,” portraying Asians as hard-working, high achieving, and meek members of society. Additionally, many characterize the stereotype as a reason to Asian-Americans having higher levels of socioeconomic status compared to other

minority groups in society, causing them to be erased from many discussions centered around racism and minority oppression.

Even with renewed advocacy against discrimination, the “model minority” stereotype persists and continuously hurts Asian-Americans’ mental health. According to a research report by the Journal of Community Health, Asian-Americans are more likely to need mental health help due to the feeling of needing to live up to society’s expectations of them. The model minority stereotype pressures Asians to achieve in academics, obtain a well paying job, and be society’s expectation of a successful person. Obviously, this constant pressure to mold into what society wants them to be hinders Asian-Americans’ mental health.

Despite the large need for help the Asian American community receives less mental health support than any other race. The National Latino and Asian American Study reported that while 18 percent of the United States population received mental health support, only 8.6 percent of Asian Americans did.

The “model minority myth” directly causes this because it builds the belief that Asian Americans who need help do not fit into this idea of “model” behavior. After all, how can you be a model person in a society that values production over mental health? As a result, it continues to stigmatize mental health for Asian Americans, in a culture that already rebukes it.

Asian-Americans also continue to face discrimination in the education system due to the model minority stereotype.

Some of my friends have been

singled out for certain things, always asked for homework answers, and expected to be extremely studious. In particular, one friend told me that substitute teachers always singled her out in class to answer questions or participate far more than other students. Although trivial, she recalled that it made her feel more pressure to live up to their assumption.

However, the most harmful thing that came from the model minority stereotype in education is the idea of “Asian versus ‘Bian.” The seemingly innocent joke of “Asian versus ‘Bian” essentially is a play on words that Asians get As and ‘Bians’ are Asians who receive Bs. This “joke” tells Asian-Americans that their own identity is based upon excelling in a class.

Society tells Asian-Americans that academic prowess and achievements define who they are, more than anything else. Furthermore, the model minority myth erases Asian-Americans from conversation about racism because it portrays them as people who already achieved social success in America. That is far from the truth.

Stereotypes like “model minority” need to change and no longer be associated with Asian-Americans. It will still continue to hurt our mental health and harm us in the schooling system. Even if not acknowledged, “positive” racism is still racism.



Blueprint Cartoon / Arlyne Noguera

College Entry Exams: Vehicles for Inequity

The SAT and ACT are not effective at evaluating academic prowess

Griffin Ruebner | Staff Writer

Imagine sitting in an uncomfortable wooden desk, frantically scrawling out mathematical equations, hoping that the cramp in your arm subsides so you can complete the most important test of your high school career.

As we dive deeper into the turbulent and unorthodox year of 2020, juniors and seniors are turning their attention to the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT). Scoring well on these tests is incredibly important because they can be the factor that determines college acceptance chances. However, the results of these exams can be misleading, and should not be a factor when it comes to college applications.

Parents and teachers make students feel that scoring well on the SAT or ACT is essential to boost their acceptance chances, and in turn, be successful in the future. Because such large amounts of pressure and importance reside on these assessments, many students panic or break down while taking them and do not perform to the best of their abilities.

“Students who struggle with test anxiety typically fall a half a letter

grade below their peers” claims Oxford Learning about in-school tests, likely applying to standardized tests as well.

Whether a student receives high school education at a public school or private school drastically affects the outcomes of their scores.

Robert Pianta, Dean of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia, explained that, “if you just simply look at private school versus public school [and] don’t consider any other factor in the kids’ history, you see huge benefits to being in private school.”

Pianta goes on to say that on average, private schools score around 15 points higher on tests than public schools.

Moreover, the economic status of a school’s community is a factor that affects students’ scores.

U.S. public schools receive funding from state, local, and federal governments. State and local funding depends on property taxes and income in the area. Because of this, wealthier districts receive more funding and poorer districts receive less, resulting in some students attending schools with poor resources, sub-par teachers, and inadequate learning facilities.

Schools with more funding are able to better educate their students and supply them with materials needed to succeed, putting students attending underfunded schools at a disadvantage on standardized tests while the wealthy reap the rewards.

“[In 2015]... the lowest average scores were those with less than \$20,000 in family income, and the highest averages were those with more than \$200,000 in income, and the gaps are significant,” according to InsideHigherEd.

Wealth is also a factor when it comes to test preparation. There are many tutoring programs for the SAT and ACT, but they can be costly. Princeton Review offers an “SAT 1400” course that costs 1,299 dollars and guarantees that the buyer will indeed score at least a 1400 on the SAT. Families with more money can afford programs like these, exacerbating the correspondence between the wealth gap and scores.

The coronavirus pandemic brings another issue to the table. High schools across the country have cancelled the SAT and ACT, forcing some to search for test centers elsewhere. Often, the tests are cancelled last minute, leaving test takers scrambling to find other options in time for the college application deadline. Schools still offering the tests are doing so with reduced capacity.

States with more relaxed restrictions may have more opportunities for taking the exam. Wealth comes into play again as some students can afford to fly to other states or areas with less coronavirus cases and more places to take the SAT or ACT.

Even if testing centers are open, it is incredibly challenging to get a test date due to the amount of students from last spring trying to take the tests now. This year’s juniors and seniors are all trying to take the assessments at the same time. An excess amount of students combined with less testing facilities and lower capacity at each facility makes the whole process more difficult than ever.

Some colleges have temporarily gotten rid of the SAT/ACT requirement for applications this year, but many have still not. Georgetown University states that only around 1,240 of the 2,330 national bachelor degree granting colleges have dropped the requirement for fall 2021 admissions. Despite the class of 2022 also being affected, the vast majority of colleges have yet to waive SAT requirements for them.

In the end, these tests are simply vehicles for the wealthy to gain an advantage in the college admissions process. Regardless of societal factors, each student deserves equal opportunities to prove themselves.

ney paints Pocahontas as superior to the rest of her tribe due to her admiration of Christianity and the white man’s culture. Her willingness to leave her tribe and marry a man outside of it makes her a savior to her people, while in reality it shows the undercurrent of inferiority directed towards Native-American customs. This representation whitewashes the true horrors Indigenous people endured at the hands of the British.

Tiana, the only African-American princess, is transformed into a frog for the majority of the movie. Tiana is one of the few princesses who is a complex and hard-working individual. She is resilient and motivated to pursue her own goals, not just the vague concept of true love that so many other princesses search for. But because Tiana is a frog for most of the movie, this modern princess only shines through for a few moments, denying young girls the

chance to finally see a strong, independent woman who looks like them.

The Disney Princesses are a relic of a time that had a far less progressive view of gender and ethnic representation, and they do not belong in modern day society. We need to hold them to our standards of powerful women today, not those of the 1950s. They do not deserve the idolization and worship they receive, and should not play such a large role in chil-

Princesses

Continued from page 29

only encompass a slim range of the many ethnicities not included in the original princess lineup.

Even the movies with ethnic princesses included are not without their flaws. The story of Pocahontas, a Native-American woman who falls in love with Englishman John Smith glorifies colonization through its heroic portrayal of the Englishmen. Dis-

The Need for Compulsory Voting

America is stronger when everyone is engaged

Liam McGlynn | News Editor

More people voted in November's presidential election than in any other election in U.S. history. With a stunning 68 percent of eligible voters appearing at the polls this election, voter turnout this election reached the highest it has been in over a century. Despite hundreds of local and national campaigns attempting to persuade people to vote in this election, roughly 78 million eligible Americans did not vote. The ability to vote is both a responsibility and a privilege. Over 100 million Americans are not eligible to vote due to citizenship or age. It is the duty of those that can vote to exercise their right.

A possible fix to this problem would be to make voting compulsory. Compulsory voting would provide a more accurate image of how Americans feel about the candidates, create a more engaged electorate, and eliminate many of the downfalls of the current voting system.

The voting system in our country is undoubtedly flawed. From mass voter suppression to the outdated Electoral College, there is a serious need for reform to create more fair and free elections. Whether voters feel alienated by the electoral process as a whole or they simply believe their vote does not count, many do not see the importance of voting.

Currently, over twenty countries have laws for compulsory voting. Australia, Turkey, and Belgium each have voting turnouts in the high 80th percentile, and many of them fine those who do not vote without a permitted reason. Even with voter turnout in the U.S. at a record-high of 68 percent, it is nowhere near the levels of voter turnout in most developed countries.

In Australia, compulsory voting has been around since 1924 and has been incredibly effective. Election day is on a Saturday and essentially acts as a federal holiday, allowing everyone the opportunity to vote. In 2018, over 96 percent of eligible voters were registered to vote and approximately 90 percent voted, the lowest voter turnout in Australia since 1925, one year after the introduction of compulsory voting. It's hard to imagine an American election where over 215 million people vote, however, our elections could theoretically reach these rates of voter turnout if politicians adopted compulsory voting into law.

Currently, America has widespread voter suppression that disenfranchises tens of thousands of voters each election. If adopted, compulsory voting would eradicate most forms of voter suppression by ensuring that all eligible voters have the ability to vote.

Compulsory voting would also eliminate the need for candidates to have 'getting out the vote' campaigns, resulting in candidates having to tailor their campaigns to be more policy-focused, rather

than expending the effort and resources required to get people out to the polls.

As candidates plan their campaign, compulsory voting would force candidates to drastically change strategies in order to appeal to younger and minority voters who do not typically vote in great numbers. As a result, younger generations would ultimately have a greater say of how the country is run and which policies politicians enact.

It is clear that our nation is divided; however, most of those who have not voted in recent elections are more moderate, with activists on either end of the political spectrum far more likely to show up at the polls. With compulsory voting, we would be able to see a much clearer picture of the state of our nation and the political differences that divide us.

We all have a stake in the welfare of our country and we have been given the opportunity to openly express our opinions and have our voices heard. However, even in the most highly contested election in recent history, a third of Americans still refused to become involved in the political process and fulfill their civic duty. Democracy is one of our most important values, but it is fragile and is it still a democracy if not everyone votes?

Should Not Return
Continued from page 30

due to being anti-vaccination, believing it to be unnecessary because of their belief that COVID is exaggerated, and some have a lack of money and transportation necessary to obtain the vaccine.

Whether or not people would even reveal if they tested positive is another large concern that schools would have to deal with if they return. Someone who tests positive might be hesitant to reveal their test as it would mean having to stop all their activities and quarantine all by themselves. Furthermore, a stigma is emerging against those who test positive as they have become associated with carelessness and irresponsibility, making it even harder for someone to admit their positive test.

To protect the community schools must remain in distance learning; any other plan would pose a serious threat to each Lamorinda citizen's well-being.



Blueprint Cartoon / Zoe Edelman

NOAH'S NOTION

A look into collegiate football action amidst the pandemic

Noah Glosson | Head Section Editor

College Football is in full swing, despite some major changes to the traditional season setup. Instead of 110,000 fans packing Michigan's "Big House" or Penn State hosting their signature whiteouts, fans watch from home, voiding the stadium's electric game-day atmosphere.

Because of delays in conferences such as the Pac-12 and Big Ten, several teams will only play seven games to prevent complications in bowl and playoff scheduling. This left fans infuriated but also relieved to see both conferences salvage their seasons.

Conferences like the Southeastern Conference (SEC) and Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) agreed to play a full 12-game season with modifications. These modifications included limited or no spectators allowed, constant testing, and mandatory mask-mandates for staff and coaches.

Despite these precautions, teams postponed games as several players across the nation tested positive for COVID-19. The most infamous wave hit when over 22 Florida staff and players tested positive for COVID-19, forcing the postponement of their big game with LSU. Regrettably, Florida head coach, Dan Mullen, demanded 90,000 fans pack Ben Griffin Hill Stadium, despite the dangers.

Heisman Watch Update

Kyle Trask, Florida Quarterback

Florida is one of the more consistent teams in the college football world. Recently, however, they have become a dominant power, shredding teams left and right. A major reason for their success is star quarterback and senior Kyle Trask.

Through eight games, Trask has thrown for 34 touchdowns, three interceptions, with

The Current State of College Football

a completion rate of 72 percent. If the Gators make it to the National Championship, Trask could very well break the record for touchdown passes in a single season set by Joe Burrow last year.

Trask is in a tight race as many players continue to sparkle despite the unfamiliar atmospheres.

Mac Jones, Alabama Quarterback

After failing to reach the College Football Playoff for the first time, Alabama is roaring back after a disappointing end to their season. Despite quarterback Tua Tagovailoa leaving for South Beach, Mac Jones is already a rising star and not just a top Heisman prospect, but a quarterback prospect as well.

Alabama is currently undefeated and sits at the number one overall spot while Mac Jones is helping boost a herculean football team. Jones has accumulated 23 touchdown passes against just three interceptions. Jones, a junior, is eligible for the 2020 NFL draft as is Trask. Trask and Jones are clashing for the trophy, but he remains a little behind the Florida QB.

Trevor Lawrence, Clemson Quarterback

Coming out of high school, many analysts viewed Clemson quarterback Trevor Lawrence as a "once in a generation type player." With immense vision and a high football IQ, Lawrence, as a freshman, led his team

to a monumental victory over Alabama.

Over the past two years, Lawrence continues to shine as Clemson's best player. Lawrence has never lost a regular-season game and his only loss came against LSU in last year's national championship game.

Despite missing time due to COVID-19, Lawrence has thrown 19 touchdowns against two interceptions in just five games. Lawrence is on track for another championship appearance and possibly Clemson's third ring in the last five seasons.

Sarah Fuller Makes History

On Nov. 29, Sarah Fuller became the first female to play in a Power Five Conference Game. Fuller, also a star soccer player for Vanderbilt, became the top placekicker for the struggling program. Fuller kicked a thirty-yard squib that Missouri corralled at around their own 35-yard line. While she faced praise and controversy, the SEC named her player of the week.

What Happens Now?

There is a massive surge in COVID-19 cases and the programs must be vigilant. What is important is being able to move through the year safely. Once again, there may not be a vaccine available to the public until the middle of 2021 and there is no guarantee professional and college sports will be normal. With so much uncertainty, fans, players, and coaches need to remain calm and trust the process.

Blueprint Cartoon / Zoe Edelman



layout by zoe edelman



Daniel's Dictations: Dramatic Decline In Sports Television Ratings

Sports television networks fight for viewers as COVID takes top priority

Daniel Adri | Staff Writer

While collegiate and professional sports are back in stadiums, fans are still confined to either attend in a limited fashion or not at all, depending on the team and place. However, even with fans being barred from in-person attendance, viewership is currently down as television networks experience some of the worst ratings ever. No sport seems to be exempt from this either, whether it is the remainder of the National Basketball Association (NBA) season at the end of July to the current National Football League (NFL) season.

When sports seasons shut down in early March fans quickly longed for competition to resume. Yet so few people are watching sports; why?

The NBA season was one of the first sports to resume its competition. The end of the regular season and the entire playoffs kicked off in Florida, inside the NBA's "bubble". In Game One of the NBA Finals, TV ratings stood at an all-time low ranking the lowest-rated and least-watched game on record, according to Sports Media Watch.

A couple of key factors affected the ratings including the season being delayed for months and people not being accustomed to watching the games differently than in years past.

Not to mention the postponement of the NBA season caused NBA and NFL games to overlap, forcing viewers to pick which sport they were going to watch.

The NBA was far from alone as most major sports experienced a dramatic decrease in viewership, including the MLB. In October, the World Series was the least-watched one on record, and it was down 30 percent from the World Series ratings in the previous year.

Additionally, certain collegiate events have seen a drastic decrease from typical ratings. On Nov. 28, rivals Alabama and Auburn squared off in a matchup many National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) fans look forward to. The game tallied the least amount of views in the past eight years and was down



42 percent from their previous meeting last season.

These analytic trends continue to recur, even though everyone is at home, by their TV's. This year, nationwide lockdowns occurred forcing people inside their own homes, yet TV ratings were at record low numbers.

Daily lives have been greatly affected by COVID, including routines. For some, routines consist of leaving the house for school or work and sitting down later at night to watch sports games. When people are stuck at home all day, this can affect when and what people want to watch on TV.

To match peoples' changing routines the NFL is constantly shifting their schedules. On Dec. 2nd, the Steelers vs. Ravens game kicked off at 12:40 p.m., right in the middle of school and work for people. Scheduling difficulties

force leagues to play games at odd hours and can result in a steep decline in viewership.

It is also worth considering that the election played a factor in taking viewership away from sports games. According to Nielsen Media Research, CNN's viewership grew by 135 percent in the month of November. The rise of News TV ratings likely means that more people currently choose to watch News networks in search of constant COVID updates.

In the chaotic world that is everyday life, the time people typically dedicate to watching sports is consumed by more important everyday duties and interests. Ideally, people can soon go back to enjoying sports the same way they did before these COVID times arose. Yet the sports world, rightly so, is put on hold as people focus on keeping themselves safe and informed during these difficult times.



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The Importance of Proper Nutrition in Sports

How diet culture and education surrounding nutrition affects young athletes

Aysha Craig and Alexandra Ames |
Copy Editor and Staff Writer

Food is fuel for the human body, which is especially necessary during stages of development. To grow stronger and enhance physical performance one needs to work their body along with fueling it. This is common knowledge, however, to many young athletes it is misleading when they are commonly advised to follow a coaches' written food plan or focus solely on cutting calories to reach a desired weight.

Acalanes coaches take various approaches to educate their athletes on the importance of nutrition, making an impact on the relationship athletes develop with different food groups.

One strategy amongst coaches is to provide specific resources to athletes, such as pre-game informational packets, to guide their food choices.

"We want players to have enough healthy calories to have energy for the match without feeling bogged down and to be well-hydrated before the match. This might include a variety of fruits, vegetables, and certain types of carbohydrates while avoiding heavy, greasy foods, overly processed foods, or things containing high sugar content," physician and women's junior varsity (JV) volleyball coach Alan Go said.

In the short term, this guidance can be helpful as it is informative and easy to access.

"[The nutrition packets] help a lot because I know I am eating foods that will give me enough strength during the match," JV volleyball player and junior Gianna Manzone said.

Proper nutrients enhance the physical performance of athletes in all sports which is why many coaches take on the responsibility of educating and advising their players. However, restrictions on what to eat before a game can feel pressuring, ultimately causing athletes to develop bad eating habits.

"Our coaches discourage eating carbs and junk food, as well as salty foods as the salt retains water in our bodies and makes us weigh more than we should," varsity wrestler and junior Matt Soto said.

Comparison between one another along with pressure from coaches causes some athletes to turn to dieting or restricting methods so they can fit in with their teammates.

"There totally is an athlete's diet stereotype that is commonly advertised in pictures on social media," varsity cross country runner and senior Lena Johnson said, "It is important to remember that people's bodies work differently though. The most important thing to do is to maintain a positive relationship with food which for me means listening to my body when I'm hungry or craving something and not restricting myself."

Although it is important to educate young athletes about nutrition and proper fueling, it is not always common amongst coaches for various reasons.

"I think one barrier that may prevent most of my coaches from talking to their athletes about [nutrition] is that they are all men, so it may feel unfamiliar for them to teach girls who may be struggling with fueling their bodies sufficiently," Johnson said.

Subsequently, some coaches leave the task of learning about nutrition to athletes to figure out on their own.

"I do not really tell my players what they should and should not eat as they are athletes and know their own bodies and how they are affected by certain foods," women's JV lacrosse coach Steve Seiler said.

As well, nutrition is sometimes downplayed by the importance of hydration in sports. Many coaches stress that athletes be consistent when

drinking water.

"I do not think my coach has ever mentioned anything about nutrition or foods we should restrict, it's mainly all about water intake and how we need to stay hydrated," varsity lacrosse player and sophomore David Depaepe said.

When athletes don't see immediate results from their food or water intake, they may make unhealthy decisions to reach a physical goal quickly. Therefore, eating disorders are prevalent among athletes especially in lean sports where low body weight can be advantageous.

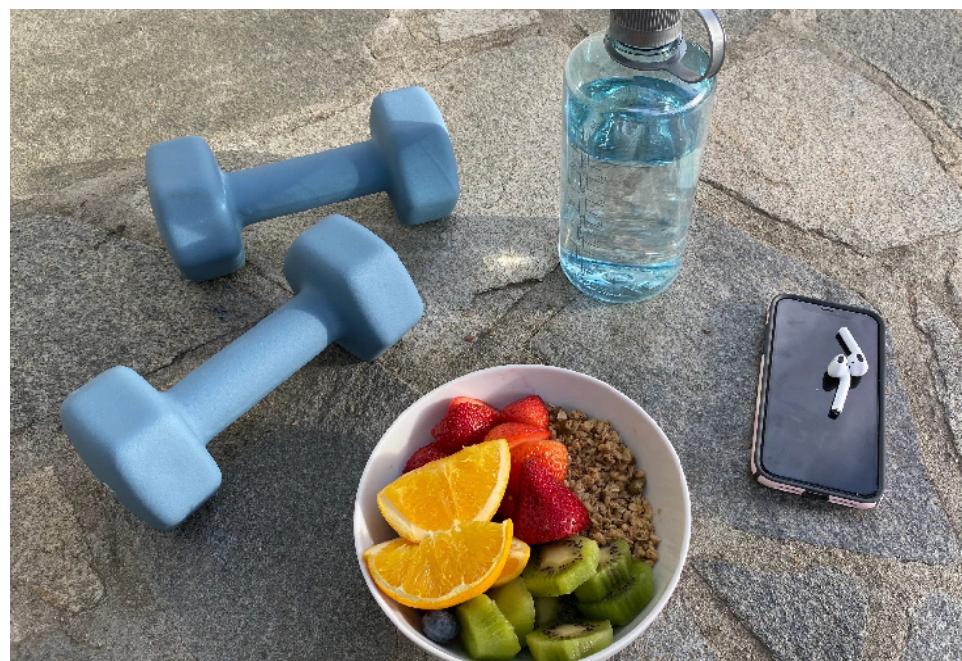
"I feel pretty pressured about my weight but I am mostly unbothered because it is such an essential aspect of [wrestling]," Soto said.

To prevent athletes from losing weight in unhealthy ways, coaches delve into detail about the human body emphasizing that proper fueling is essential for both performance and recovery.

"We talk about the different energy systems and how they are fueled along with normal muscle function and the nutrients required to keep that happening at an optimum level," varsity shot put coach and Sports Medicine teacher Chris Clark said.

Athletes encounter the task of navigating nutritious choices regardless of their sport, making it a topic of importance.

"It is key for student-athletes to recognize the importance of adopting healthy dietary choices not just for improving their short-term athletic skills but also for their long-term health," Go said.



Blueprint Photo / Emma Uffelman

Archer's Analysis: California High School Sports Are Not Ready

COVID surge halts the potential start of high school sports, as it should

Mason Archer | Sports Editor

With COVID cases surging in California and the issuance of new stay-at-home orders in the Bay Area, the passing of necessary guidelines for a reopening of high school sports is on hold.

Currently, high school sports resuming play rests in the hands of state officials in coherence with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). For sports to commence, the CDPH must deem it safe for high school sports to begin by issuing new guidelines permitting competition. Consequently, the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF), which governs high school sports in California, remains stuck as they await clearance to start-up sports.

The new COVID surge forced the CDPH to postpone their updated guidelines until Jan. 1, 2021. The first official high school sports practices were set for Dec. 7, however, with COVID cases trending upwards, that will not be the case.

Additionally, with new stay at home orders in effect, Acalanes Athletic Director Randy Takahashi canceled all sports camps indefinitely.

Despite the COVID-related setbacks, coaches and sports programs remain optimistic that the beginning of competitive sports play is near.

As COVID continues to impact the timeline for high school sports returning, the state and CIF are under pressure from parents and athletes to permit sports to begin as soon as possible. Regardless, the state and CDPH remain firm on their decision to grant clearance to the CIF.

Pressure from parents and athletes is reasonable, but everyone involved in the sports community needs to understand the difficulty with creating a safe sporting environment.

Contact sports put athletes at a huge risk as well as anyone those athletes come in contact with outside of practices and games. Acalanes football, for example, practices under strict regulations that allows athletes to compete safely, however, contact is very minimal com-

pared to the level during competitive play.

They have successfully practiced since the summer months, but the strict regulations they continue to adhere to would not permit high levels of contact present during normal competition.

The uncontrollable factors and high risks that go hand in hand with starting up fall sports this winter makes it nearly impossible to allow sports to play without expecting a considerable amount of positive COVID cases.

Take the National Football League (NFL), for example, who puts millions of dollars into COVID testing and precautions, including daily testing and regulations outside of their facilities, to ensure the safety of players and coaches. Yet, nearly every week the NFL tallies more positive tests forcing players to isolate themselves and miss the necessary amount of time to protect their organization.

The NFL continues to play week to week handling the positive COVID tests as they go, but that makes it hard to believe that high school sports programs will successfully play and complete fall sports seasons. With minimal COVID precautions compared to that of an NFL team, and with kids that may not control their actions outside of practice and games, it seems ridiculous to think high school sports can have a successful safe season.

State officials, the CDPH, the CIF, high school sports programs, and everyone else involved obviously expects positive COVID tests will happen, but the question is whether or not they will be able to overcome the



Blueprint Photo / Lue Van Handel

spread of COVID through high school sports.

With hospitals and health clinics under immense pressure to care for patients, allowing high school sports to begin knowing positive tests will happen, with the possibility of people needing hospitalization, would be disastrous.

Everyone is undeniably ready for high school sports to commence, but without being able to confidently create an environment where athletes can compete safely, it may be best to wait. Permitting high school sports play prematurely could be an insurmountable mistake.

FREEMAN TUTOR

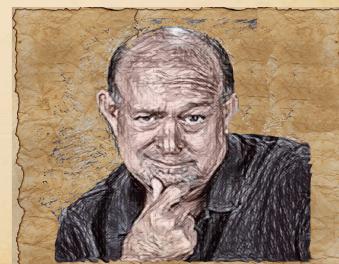
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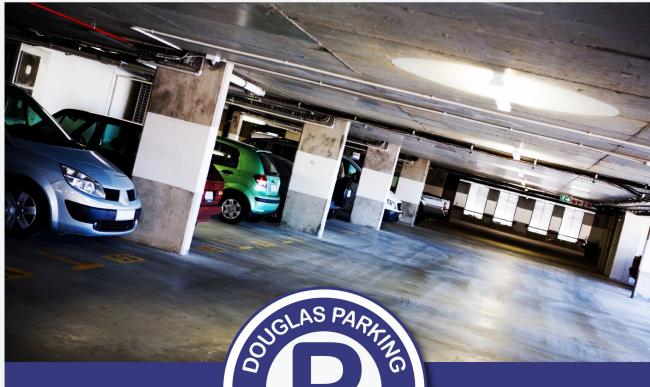


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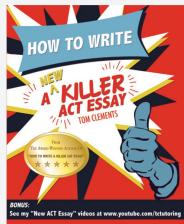
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- HYBRID LEARNING WILL ONLY START AFTER TWO WEEKS IN RED

OCT. 21

- APPROVAL FOR HYBRID LEARNING SECOND SEMESTER
- COUNTY RED AT THE TIME

JULY 14

- APPROVAL OF ALL SCHEDULES: FIRST HYBRID, IN-PERSON, FULLY ONLINE

NOV. 19

- INTENT TO RETURN DECLARATION SENT TO PARENTS/ GUARDIANS

NOV. 30/ DEC

- DISTRICTWIDE PARENT FORUM ABOUT LEARNING MODELS
- COHORT SCHEDULES FINALIZED AND RELEASED TO STUDENTS

JAN. 5

- PLANNED START OF THE NEW LEARNING MODEL (MUST BE IN THE RED TIER FOR TWO WEEKS)

